



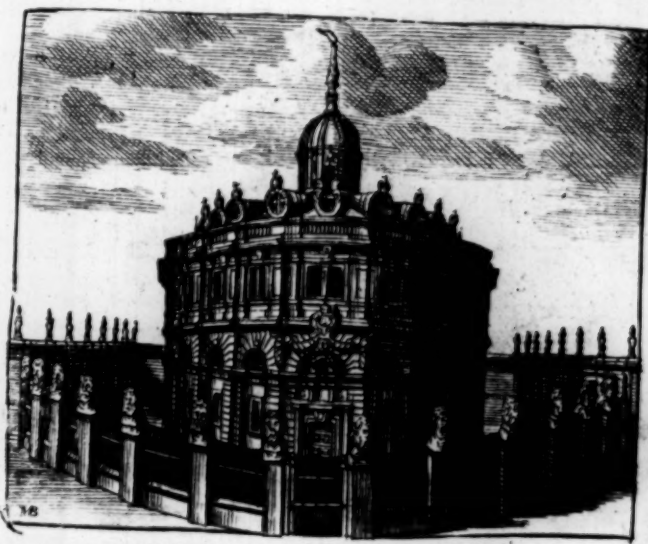


THE
Ladies Calling
IN TWO PARTS.

By the Author of the WHOLE DUTY OF
MAN, &c.

The Eleventh Impression.

*Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain; but a Wo-
man that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised,*
Prov. 31. 30.



OXFORD,
Printed at the THEATER, MDCCXX.

Ladies Calling.

IN TWO PARTS.

By the Author of THE WHOLE DUTY OF
A WOMAN.

The History of the Institution.

It is a beautiful and useful work, and a
most interesting and useful one, and a most
interesting and useful one.



T H E

Editor to the Reader.

IT is a popular reproach usually cast upon Writers in Morality, and Perswaders to Devotion, that while they with pompous words represent Virtue as a sufficient reward to her self, and exhort to the contempt of Glory; they prefix their names to their labours, and make the Title-page a confutation of the Book that follows it.

Our Author has effectually averted this objection, having been so far from seeking a name from others, as not to have left a possibility for the discovery of his own: but like the River *Nilus*, that gives fertility and blessing where soe'er he passes, hides his head; and permits himself to be only known in the benefits which he dispenses.

By what methods the other most useful Works of this excellent Author have stoln themselves into the World, I am not enabled to relate, but having been made a party to the Publication of this present, it may be expected that I render some account thereof. For although the curiosity of enquiring into that which is industriously conceal'd, be such a rudeness

The Editor

ness, and injustice also, as by no means deserves to be encouraged; yet where a benefit has been receiv'd, for those who are oblig'd to desire to acquaint themselves with the Person unto whom they stand indebted, that they may pay a respect at least, if they can reach at no more equal Retribution; this has such a pretence to gratitude, as may justly demand to be consider'd. And it will be some satisfaction to the ingenuous enquirer, that tho' he have not inform'd himself in the particulars which he desires, he has not been deficient in the inquest, and knows as much as is possible.

The Reader therefore may please to understand, that somewhat more than two months since, I receiv'd a Letter, accompanied with a Roll of Papers, opening the which I found it was written by a hand which I was utterly a stranger to, and that had no name subscrib'd, the purport whereof was as follows,

SIR,

THE general report of your Candour persuades me you will not reject an Address tho' from an unknown hand, which encourages me to the sending these papers to you, with a desire you would please to peruse them, and commit them either to the Press or the Fire as you find them worthy. I shall not need to tell you who I am, for if my suit be accepted, I have what I desire without it: if it
be

To the Reader.

*be not, 'tis my interest you should not know who
'tis that has thus importun'd you. Your Charity I
assure my self, will at a venture pardon,*

SIR,

Your humble Servant.

'Twill be superfluous to say how much I was surpriz'd with this so unusual Address, how much affected with the singular Modesty, and Humility which it exprest: and after all how much transported upon viewing the Treasure, which was thus, as from the Clouds dropt into my hands. Nor was I long in determining which of the two ways of disposal proposed unto me, was to be made use of: and indeed I should much sooner have perform'd my trust, and taken care that this excellent Tract had immediately seen the light, had it not been needful to transcribe the whole, before it could safely be committed to the Press.

This I mention, not only to excuse the delay of the Edition, but more especially to beg a pardon for the mis-adventures of it. It being not easy in a written Copy, where a recourse is not to be had to the Author, to do him justice, and avoid failures and mistakes: which in the present instance was the more hazardous, in that every departure from the Author's inimitable pattern would certainly be for the worse.

But

But to excuse and complement is any where a very insipid foolish thing, and most intolerable in a serious concern: I shall not therefore say ought that looks that way, only offer a short request, which I suppose will be equally in the behalf of the Author of this Tract, the Editor, and the Readers of it. Which is, that whosoever takes this Book in hand, would seriously consider it, and doing so, receive the infinite Benefits of uniform Virtue, and sincere Piety, the documents whereof are here with all possible advantages propos'd: and thereby give the Author that greatest of blessings, the being an instrument to the Eternal happiness of Souls; and to us who deal in the affair of Printing, afford some share in this most desirable event, absolving us from the charge of having done mischief, instead of service to the World. For, to say the truth, no Book is so fatally destructive as that which convinces of duty, but fails of perswading to it. But if the best Books can do harm, 'twill certainly be difficult to make a plea for the multitudes of a contrary kind, which now especially usurp upon the Age.



THE PREFACE.

THO' the smallness of this tract will scarce justify the solemnity of a Preface; yet remembering 'tis design'd for those who are accustomed to Ceremonious Addresses, I think it not best to approach them too abruptly. And indeed besides the Civility, there seems some use of it in order to my design. To advise, or reprove, is so ungrateful an Office, that he that undertakes it, had need use all previous arts to vindicate the sincerity of his purpose, and to convince
the

The Preface.

the person admonish'd, that 'tis neither spleen nor prejudice, but the most real exuberant kindness which prompts him to inflict those wounds of a friend, Prov. 27. 6. and that he is never less an enemy, than when he thus tells them the truth, Gal. 4. 16. Therefore, tho' they may in the ensuing leaves meet with some things which may have a shew of severity, yet let me assure my Reader, they have indeed a design of the greatest service, by correcting the extravagance of some, to rescue the whole Sex, as from the Contagion of the example, so from the community of the blame. For such is either the inadvertence, or malice of a great part of Mankind, that (against all rules of discourse) they deduce generals from particulars, make every Woman so far an Eve, that her depravation shall forfeit her whole kind; and because there are foolish and scandalous Women, will scarce allow there are any other.

The

The Preface.

The truth is, the Error seems in many Men to be affected; they propose to themselves unworthy ends on Women, and make all their observations wholly in order to those. He that is upon a base pursuit, takes a particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the rest fall not within his Sphere: and 'tis too probable he is so abundantly supplied for that absolute consideration that he never descends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may be yet a deeper Original of the scandal: the World is much govern'd by estimation: and as applause encourages and exalts, so an universal Contempt debases and dejects the Spirit. If it can once pass into a maxim, that Women are such silly or vicious Creatures, it may put fair for the making them so indeed. Themselves may imbibe the common opinion, charge all their Personal Faults on their Sex, think that they do but their kind, when indeed they most contradict it,

b

and

The Preface.

and no more aspire to any thing worthy, than a Man can pretend to the Excellencies of an Angel. And indeed this seems to be the practical inference of some Women, who could hardly have descended to such Dishonours, had they not before been as vile in their own eyes, as they have afterwards render'd themselves in others.

It may therefore upon this account be a necessary Charity to the Sex, to acquaint them with their own Value, animate them to some higher thoughts of themselves; not to yield their Suffrage to those injurious Estimates the World hath made of them, and from a supposed Incapacity of nobler things, to neglect the pursuit of them; from which God and Nature have no more precluded the Feminine, than the Masculine part of Mankind.

In reference to Secular Considerations, their advantages are most important; Women have a very powerful influence upon all sorts of Transactions

The Preface.

actions in the World: the engaging of the Delilah, and plowing with the heifer, Judges 14. and 16. being ever the surest way to undermine the Counsels, and master the force of the stoutest Samson. And accordingly Histories of all kinds assure us, that the Gynæceum has still had a Rival Suffrage with the Senate. I might urge the more regular Powers which appertain unto that Sex: that all Mankind is the Pupil and Disciple of Female-institution: the Daughters 'till they write Women, and the Sons 'till the first seven years be past; the time when the mind is most ductile, and prepar'd to receive impresson, being wholly in the Care and Conduct of the Mother. And whereas 'tis observ'd by Aristotle in his Politicks, (and is a proof of his being as wise, as he was a learned Man) that the Estate of Republicks entirely hangs on private Families, the little Monarchies both composing and giving Law unto the great; 'tis evident that

The Preface.

the disposal of Families and all domestic concerns therein, lies chiefly on the Wife whence the same Aristotle declares, that the Spartans notwithstanding their ready address to Empire, by their great Frugality, Industry, and military Virtue, could have but half a Happiness, as failing on the part of their Wives. But waving these reflections, I shall fix only on the Personal Accomplishments of the Sex, and peculiarly that which is the most principal Endowment of the Rational Nature, I mean their Understanding. Where first it will be a little hard to pronounce, that they are naturally inferior to men; when 'tis consider'd how much of extrinsick weight is put in the ballance to turn it on the mens side. Men have their parts cultivated and improv'd by Education, refin'd and subtiliz'd by Learning and Arts, are like an inclosed piece of a Common, which by Industry and Husbandry, becomes a different thing from the rest,

The Preface.

rest, tho' the natural Turf own'd no such inequality. And truly had Women the same advantage, I dare not say but they would make as good returns of it; some of those few that have been try'd, have been eminent in several parts of Learning. To omit the modern instances, Theano after the death of Pythagoras kept up his School; Socrates confesses himself to have been instructed, not only in Rhetorick by Aspasia, but even in the highest points of Philosophy by Diotime. The Roman story informs us of the deep wisdom of Tanaquil, Cornelia, Livia, to pass by others. And were we sure they would have ballast to their sails, have humility enough to poise them against the vanity of Learning, I see not why they might not more frequently be entrusted with it; for if they could be secured against this weed, doubtless the soil is rich enough to bear a good crop. But not to oppose a received opinion, let it be admitted,
that

The Preface.

that in respect of their intellects they are below men; yet sure in the sublimest part of Humanity, they are their equals: they have Souls of as Divine an Original, as endless a Duration, and as capable of infinite Beatitude. That spiritual Essence, that ray of Divinity, owns no distinction of Sexes; so that in this sense also, that Aphorism of the Apostle holds good, there is neither Male nor Female, but all are one, Gal. 3. 28. And sure this is the one transcendent Excellency of Human Nature. For alas, what value can comparatively be set upon all other Qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the beasts that perish. And this, as it is the highest pitch of their worth, so it is the safest subject of their Contemplations: other knowledge, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 8. 1. may puff up, this only will edify.

*As therefore when we would pride our selves, we use not to boast our meaner, but our best Qualities: so let
me*

The Preface.

me sollicit Ladies to be so just to themselves, as not to take their own measures by any thing below this. Why should they take so low a level of Greatness, as to value themselves upon a title which is but a bigger blast of Air, when they may derive their descent from above the Stars, claim cognation with Divinity? Why should they dote on the fictitious image of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glass presents them, when they need but look inward to see an infinitely fairer Idea, and Emanation of the Eternal Brightness? Indeed did they make a just estimate of themselves in this respect, it would overwhelm the vanity of those inferiour things wherein they have now such complacency, nor would they suffer their nobler part to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

But there is also another consequent which would flow from that esteem; they would solicitously preserve what
they

The Preface.

they so highly prize, it being natural for us to proportion our care to our value. They would be jealously vigilant against every thing, that might eclipse the radiancy, or contaminate the purity of their Souls. 'Twas the advice of an Heathen Moralist, Reverthy self: and 'twas very wholesom counsel: for next our due Veneration to God, a Reverence to our selves, is the most severe controller of all exorbitancies. How can a Soul that remembers its Celestial extraction, wallow it self in the mire, stoop to any sordid degenerate practices? 'Tis said of Themistocles, that seeing once a rich booty about the dead Corps of his Enemies, he touched it not, but pointing to another, said, take thou that, for thou art not Themistocles. If then a little military fame could so elevate his thoughts, 'tis a shame that any who carry an immortal Spirit about them, should not be rais'd above all the contemptible baits of this sublunary World. Why should

The Preface.

*Should they not with the like disdain
turn over all sensual inordinancies to
meer Animals, and Creatures that
have no higher principles than that of
sense, whilst themselves soar up to
those more sublimated pleasures,
which are at Gods right hand for
evermore, Psalm 16. 11.*

*We may therefore conclude, that
whatever vicious impotence Women
are under, it is acquir'd, not natural;
nor deriv'd from any illiberality of
God's, but from the ill managery of
his bounty. He has placed within
them a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, suf-
ficient to shelter and conduct them
through all the storms, all the intrica-
cies that can occur in their journey to
Canaan; if they will forget that more
intrinsick part of their being, live as if
they were all body, reject the Manna,
and rave after the Quails; that de-
struction which will thereby be in-
duced, they must own to spring from
themselves. Let them not charge God*
c *foolish.*

The Preface.

foolishly, or think that by making them Women, he necessitated them to be Proud or Wanton, Vain or Peevish; since 'tis manifest he made them to better purposes, was not partial to the other Sex; but that having, as the Prophet speaks, abundance of spirit, Mal. 2. he equally dispensed it, and gave the feeblest Woman as large and capacious a Soul, as that of the greatest Heroe.

*Nay, give me leave to say farther, that as to an Eternal well being, he seems to have placed them in more advantageous circumstances, than he has done Men. He has implanted in them some native propensions, which (as I shall hereafter have occasion to observe) do much facilitate the operations of Grace upon them. Besides, there are many temptations to which Men are expos'd that are out of their road. How hard is it for a Man to converse in the World, but he shall be importun'd to Debauchery and Excess, must forfeit his Sobriety, to maintain
the*

The Preface.

the Reputation of a sociable Person? Again, how liable are they by a promiscuous Conversation, among variety of humours, to meet with affronts, which the Maxims of Honour will tell them, must (in spite of all Christ's interdicts) be reveng'd? And this engages them in Quarrels, sometimes in Murders. Now none of these are incident to Women: they must in these and some other instances attack temptations, violently ravish guilt, and abandon their Sex, the whole Oeconomy of their estate, e're they can divest themselves of their innocence. So that God seems in many particulars, to have closelier fenced them in, and not left them to those wilder excursions, for which the customary liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. In short, they have so many advantages toward Vertue, that tho' the Philosopher made it one of his solemn acknowledgements to God, that he had made him a Man, not a Woman: yet I think

The Preface.

Christian Women have now reason enough to invert that form, and to thank God that he made them Women, and not Men.

But we know advantages which are only in speculation, are looked on with some diffidence, 'till there have been some practical experiment made of them; I shall therefore evidence the problem by demonstration and instance; desiring my Readers to measure the possibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of Vertue and Piety, by what others have attained to. I shall not fetch examples of Morality from heathen Women, because I am now upon an higher strain; yet many such might be brought to the reproach of many Women, who pretending to more, fall infinitely short of that:) 'tis Christian Vertue that I am now recommending, and which has been eminently exemplified in many of their Sex. How many Women do we read of in the Gospel,

The Preface.

pel, who in all the duties of assiduous attendance on Christ, liberalities of love and respect, nay, even in zeal and courage, surpassed even the Apostles themselves? We find his Cross surrounded, his Passion celebrated by the avowed tears and lamentations of devout Women, when the most sanguine of his Disciples had denied, yea forswore, and all had forsaken him. Nay, even death it self could not extinguish their love: we find the devout Maries designing a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous respect to his Corps. And accordingly, 'tis a memorable attestation Christ gives to their Piety, by making them the first witnesses of his Resurrection, the prime Evangelists to proclaim those glad Tidings; and, as a Learned Man speaks, Apostles to the Apostles. Nor is the devotion of that Sex to be found only in the sacred Records: the Primitive times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female sufferers

The Preface.

ferers of all ages and conditions, who by the fervour of their Zeal, had overcome the timorousness of their nature, and wearied the cruelty of their Persecutors. And as Women helped to augment the number of Martyrs, so did they of Confessors also in a stout owning, and diligent practice of Christianity. Queens and Empreſſes knew then no title ſo glorious, as that of a nursing Mother to the Church; they have often exchang'd their Palaces for little Cells and Oratories, and valued not their own Diadems, in comparison with their Saviour's Crown of Thorns, And tho' by a perpetual declination from that priſtine Zeal, the inſtances have in every Age grown leſs numerous, yet none has wanted ſome very illuſtrious examples. Nay, even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are, I doubt not, many, who (according to their opportunities) tranſcribe the former Copies, live like people that know they muſt live hereafter,

The Preface.

after, and present us yet with some specimen of antient Vertue. Nay, to speak an impartial truth, 'tis not to be denied, but the reputation of Religion is more kept up by Women than Men, many of this Sex countenancing it by their Practice, whereas more of the other do not only neglect, but decry it. And now, since Women are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, who by doing the thing give the surest evidence that 'tis not unfeasible, why should any plead an impossibility? In matter of Vanity and Pomp they are not so easily dishearten'd, no pattern of that kind can be set, which will not be industriously imitated; nay, in the greatest inequality of materials for it. Why then should their emulation leave them, where only it could do them good? how comes it, that of those who have equal principles of a Spiritual Being, some live according to the Dignity of it, and others who see them do so, do yet live as if they assented to that
Phi-

The Preface.

Philosopher's paradox, who said, Women had no Souls; or at least were of the Pythagorean Sect, and looked upon themselves only as the Jails and Prisons of former offending Spirits, which they resolv'd to fit for yet a viler Transmigration; give them the appetites of Beasts, before they assume the Bodies? This is indeed an unlucky Humility, that those who in all other instances are apt to overween, should here sink so much below themselves. And I hope 'twill not appear an uncivil address, to perswade them to a juster estimate of their own worth, And if what has been said to that end, may have any effect, I shall not desire a better Preparation to the ensuing Tract; since she that duly considers her own capacity of Eternal Bliss, and withal, the possibility of as endless a Misery, according as she performs or neglects the several parts of her Duty, will sure need no other incentive to the diligent Pursuit of it.

T H E





THE
LADIES CALLING.

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Modesty.

I. **I**T is now many years since an Address was made to the Gentry of this Nation, to perswade them to that Vertue which would be both their Pleasure and Reward. I cannot, I confess, boast any such Effect of that, as should much inspirit the hopes of a new Attempt; yet since we see in our proper secular Concerns, Defeats do many times animate no less than Success, I know not why in this more charitable Design I should sit down discourag'd. Men usually raise not a Siege upon the first repulse,
A pulse,

pulse, but reinforce their Batteries, observe more curiously which are the most assailable, accessible parts, and accordingly dispose their Assault: it will then be no unreasonable imitation in the present case, if after a successful Attempt upon the more impregnable, Masculine part of the Gentry, I now assay the Feminine, whose native Softness and Gentleness may render them less apt for that resistance of good Counsel, wherein too many men place their Gallantry.

2. I presume those to whom that little Tract was at first design'd, will be so willing to relinquish their Title, that I might without imputation of Robbery exchange my Patrons, and by a new Dedication supersede the labour of a new Book. And indeed, since what was there said was founded more on the distinction of Qualities than of Sex, there would not need many razures to render it as proper for the one as the other; and I shall take so much advantage of it, as to assure the Female Gentry, that they may there find much of the Duty incumbent on them, in respect of that Rank and Condition they hold in the world: and therefore, though I shall sometimes make some reflections on it, yet as to the main, I shall think it the easiest course, as well for them as my self, to direct them thither.

3. BUT it may seem to have too much of the Pedant, to entertain new Scholars only with the cast or nauseated learning of the old; and



and when I remember I write to Ladies, who use to think the newness of any thing a considerable Addition to it's value, I conceive myself oblig'd as well in Civility to their humour, as Charity to their needs, to give them something which they may own as their peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable, I shall affix it to their Sex; and make it the subject of my present inquisition, what in respect of that are the proper and distinct Obligations, under which, by the assignment of God and Nature they are plac'd.

4. THAT the Obligation to Moral and Christian Vertues is in it self universal, and not confin'd to any Sex or Person, is not to be denied: yet, as in Humane Constitutions there are often Precepts, which (tho' not exclusive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at some particular Rank or Order of Men; so in the Laws of God and Nature, there appears the like distinction. That All-wise Creator, who hath put peculiar Properties and Inclinations into his Creatures, hath accordingly design'd their actuating and improving them: and altho' in mankind, which differs not in specie but in gender, the variety may seem less; yet there is still enough to found some diversity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This sure is shadow'd to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the several Sexes, *Deut.*

22. 5. and yet more clearly evinc'd in the Precept which the Apostles address to women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. and 1. *Pet.* 3. 3. Nay, this is so granted a Truth, that all Ages and Nations have made some distinction between Masculine and Feminine Vertues; Nature having not only given a distinction as to the Beauties of their outward Form, but also in their very mould and constitution implanted peculiar aptnesses and Proprieties of mind, which accordingly vary the measure of Decency; that being comely for the one Sex, which often is not (at least in the same degree) for the other. It will therefore be no absurd attempt, to decipher those Excellencies, which are the genuine and proper ornaments of Women: which tho' in some instances they may perhaps prove coincident with those of Men; yet even those which are equally inclusive of both, by the Divine command may have some additional weight on the Female side, in respect of Decency, Fame, or some other (not despicable) consideration.

5. FOR the better directing our present Inquisition, it will be most regular, first to inquire what those Virtues are, which are universally necessary to Women, in all Ages and circumstances of their lives: such, which like the first matter, are pre-requir'd for all forms; which like a firm and solid Basis, must support all various Events, all changes of their Condition
or

or Relations. And secondly, we shall consider them in those changes; track them through the several Stages and Periods of Life through those several States which create the most considerable mutations to them; and in each of those, consider what are the new and proportionate Accessions of Duty.

6. As in the outward Accommodations of Life, the things of most daily and indispensable use, deserve the greatest value; so in Moral or Divine Endowments, the benefit of possessing is best measur'd by the misery of wanting them. This first rank therefore of Female Vertues which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being so strictly necessary, that their absence is not only a privative ill, but also exposes to a deluge of all positive mischiefs consequent to that Privation.

7. THIS will be found true in all the severals we are to pass through, but in none more eminently than in That we shall choose to begin with, the Virtue of Modesty; which may be consider'd in a double notion, the one as it is oppos'd to Boldness and Indecency, the other to Lightness and Wantonness. In the first Acception *Zeno* has not ill defin'd it, to be *the Science of decent Motion*, it being that which guides and regulates the whole Behaviour, checks and controlls all rude exorbitances, and is the great Civilizer of Conversation. It is indeed a Virtue of general influence, do's not
only

only ballast the mind with sober and humble thoughts of ones self, but also steers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the face in calm and meek looks, where it so impresses it self, that it seems thence to have acquir'd the name of Shamfac'dness. Certainly. (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater lustre to a Feminine Beauty : so that St. *Paul* seems not ill to have consulted their Concerns in that Point, when he substituted that as a suppletory Ornament to *the deckings of Gold and Pearl and costly Array*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. But I fear this will be now thought too antiquated a dress, and an Apostle be esteem'd no competent Judge in this Science ; which is now become so solemn a thing, that certainly no Academy in the world can vie numbers with the Students of this Mystery. Yet when they have strain'd their Art to the highest pitch, an innocent Modesty, and native simplicity of Look, shall eclipse their Glaring Splendor, and triumph over their Artificial Handsomness. On the other side, let a Woman be dek'd with all the embellishment of Art, nay, and care of Nature too ; yet if boldness be to be read in her Face, it blots all the lines of beauty, is like a cloud over the Sun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwise Amiable, and renders it's blackness the more observable, by being plac'd near somewhat that was apt to attract the eyes.

8. BUT

8. BUT Modesty confines not it self to the Face, she is there only in shadow and effigie; but is in life and motion in the words, whence she banishes all Indecency and Rudeness, all insolent Vauntings, and supercilious Disdains, and whatever else may render a Person troublesome, or ridiculous to the Company. Nor do's she only refine the Language, but she tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandsom earnestness, or loudness of discourse, the latter whereof was thought so undecent in *Carneades*, (tho' in his publick Lectures) that the Gymnasiarch reprov'd him for it. And sure if it were not allowable in a Philosopher in his School, 'twill less become a Woman in ordinary converse; and if we consult *Prov.* 7. 11. and 9. 13. we shall find loudness and clamour in Women, coupl'd with such other Epithets, as will surely not much recommend it. A Womans tongue should indeed be like the imaginary Musick of the Spheres, sweet and charming; but not to be heard at a distance.

9. AND as Modesty prescribes the manner, so it do's also the measure of speaking, restrains all excessive talkativeness, a fault incident to none but the bold; the monopolizing of discourse being one of the greatest assumings imaginable, and so rude an imposing upon the company, that there can scarce be a greater indecency in conversation. This is ingeniously expressed by our divine Poet *Herbert*:
A

A Civil Guest
Will no more talk all, than eat all the Feast.

He that ingrosses the talk, enforces silence upon the rest, and so is presum'd to look on them only as his Auditors and Pupils, whilst he magisteriously dictates to them: which gave occasion to *Socrates* to say, *It is arrogance to speak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed universally an insolent unbecoming thing, but most peculiarly so in a Woman.

10. THE ancient Romans thought it so much so, that they allow'd not that Sex to speak publicly, tho' it were in their own necessary defence; insomuch, that when *Amesia* stood forth to plead her own cause in the Senate, they lookt on it as so prodigious a thing, that they sent to consult the Oracle what it portended to the State. And tho' these first severities were soon lost in the successes of that Empire, *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more, whose either necessity or impudence, perswaded them to repeat this unhandson attempt.

11. AND this great indecency of Loquacity in Women, I am willing to hope is the reason why that Sex is so generally charged with it: not that they are all guilty, but that when they are, it appears so unhandson, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were

were from the ungracefulness of the thing, or from the propension Women have to it, I shall not determine; but we find the Apostle very earnest in his cautions against it. 1 *Cor.* 14. 34. he expressly enjoyns Women *to keep silence in the Church* and *v.* 35. he affirms *it is a shame for them to speak there.* And tho' this seems only restrain'd to the Ecclesiastical Assemblies; yet even so it reaches home to the gifted Women of our Age, who take upon them to be Teachers; whereas he allow'd them not to speak in the Church, no not in order to learning, tho' a more modest design than that of teaching. But besides this, he has a more indefinite prescription of silence to Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. *Let the woman learn in silence:* and again, *v.* 12. *to be in silence.* The Apostle seems to ground the Phrase, not only in the inferiority of the Woman, in regard of the creation and first sin, *v.* 13, 14. but also on the presumption that they needed instruction, towards which, silence has always been reckon'd an indispensable qualification, the introductory precept in all Schools, as that wherein all attention is founded. If some Women of our Age think they have out-gone that novice-state the Apostle supposes, and want no teaching; I must crave leave to believe, they want that very first Principle which should set them to learn, *viz.* the knowledge of their own ignorance: a science which so grows with study and consideration,

B

that

that *Socrates*, after a long life spent in pursuit of wisdom, gave this as the sum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing*. This proficiency seems much wanting to our female Talkers, who, in this seem to confute the common Maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance visible to others, tho' it be undiscernible to themselves: and to such we may not unfitly apply the Sarcasm of *Zeno* to a talkative Youth; *their ears are fallen into their tongue*.

12. BUT besides this assuming sort of talkativeness, there is another usually charg'd upon the Sex, a mere chatting, prating humour, which maintains it self at the cost of their neighbours, and can never want supplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their observation. This I would fain hope is most the vice of the vulgar sort of Women, the Education of the Nobler setting them above those mean entertainments. Yet when 'tis remember'd that *St. Paul, 1 Tim. 5. 13.* makes Tatling the effect of Idleness, it may not unreasonably be fear'd that where there is most of the Cause, there will be some of the Effect. And indeed it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal Visits among Persons of Quality should be kept up without this. That their Visits should be only a dumb Shew, none will suspect among Women; and when the unfashionable themes of
House-

Houſewifery, Piety, &c. are excluded, there will not remain many topicks of diſcourſe, unleſs this be call'd in to ſupply. And this indeed is a moſt inexhauſtible reſerve, it having ſo many ſprings to feed it, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible it ſhould fail. And when 'tis farther conſider'd, how apt a miniſter it is to Envy, Spleen, Revenge, and other feminine Paſſions, we cannot ſuppoſe it can be unacceptable where any of thoſe bear ſway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduced by any thing, than the vanity of Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range, than in cenſuring and deriding; nay, finds not only exerciſe, but triumph too, vain perſons ſeldom conſidering the Infirmities or Follies of others, without ſome Complacencies, and aſſuming reflexions on themſelves: which how unagreeable it renders this liberty of talking to that Modesty we recommend, is obvious enough. And would God 'twere only oppoſite to that; but it is no leſs ſo to all the obligations of Juſtice and Charity alſo, which are ſcarce ſo frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiousneſs of the tongue.

13. THERE is yet another vice of it, for which the female Sex has been generally accus'd, and that is revealing of ſecrets; an infirmity preſum'd ſo incident to them, that *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have made it one of the three things he ſolemnly repented of, that he had

trusted a Secret with a Woman. But the greater the prejudice is that they lie under in this respect, the greater ought to be their caution, to vindicate not only their Persons, but their Sex from the imputation, which is indeed extreamly reproachful: this blabbing humour being a symptom of a loose, impotent soul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that also had it's Diabetick passion, perpetually and almost insensibly evacuating all. And indeed however we are willing to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill constitution of the mind, which is oft-times no less visible in men; as on the contrary, those Women, who by reason and vertue have acquir'd a solidity and firmness of mind, are as sure repositories of a secret, as the most masculine confident: and such I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather by proposing their example to the rest shew that nature has put them under no fatal necessity of being thus impotent. A secret is no such unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the Wise man's word for it, *Eccclus, 19. 10. If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burst thee.*

14. THIS is a piece of daring manliness, which they may effect without breach of Modesty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile Boldness, which is now

too common among many even of the best Rank. Such a degenerate Age do we now live in, that every thing seems inverted, even Sexes; whilst Men fall to the Effeminacy and Niceness of Women, and Women take up the Confidence, and the Boldness of Men; and this too under the notion of good breeding. A Blush (tho' formerly reputed the colour of vertue) is accounted worse manners than those things which ought to occasion it, and such as nothing but the simplicity of a Country Girl can excuse. But the infirmity for the most part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the Town Discipline, wears off that piece of Rusticity, and advances them to a modish Assurance. Nor is that design'd to terminate in it self, but it is to carry them on, till they arrive to a perfect Metamorphosis; their Gesture, their Language, nay sometimes their Habit too, being affectedly masculine; so that what *Tacitus* speaks of *Vitellius*, in relation to his being a Prince, we may apply to them, and say, that *if others did not remember them to be Women, themselves could easily forget it.*

15. YET were this affectation confin'd only to the more innocent indifferent things, 'twere more tolerable; but alas! it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a sufficient escape from their Sex, till they have assum'd the Vices of men too. A sober modest Dialect is too effeminate

nate for them ; a blustering ranting stile, is taken up, and (to shew them proficient in it) adorn'd with all the Oaths and Imprecations, their memory or invention can supply : as if they meant to vindicate their Sex from the imputation of Timorousness, by daring God Almighty. 'Tis true indeed, an Oath sounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a Womans, it hath such an uncouth harshness, that there is no noise on this side Hell can be more amazingly odious. Yet this is a musick this discordant Age hath introduced, no former having, I think, ever heard it in places at all civiliz'd. So that the female swearers want that poor shadow of excuse the Men pretend to, it having been so far from customary, that the unwontedness could not but force them to some industry and pains, e're they could acquire the habit, and set up for female Hector's ; and essay, wherein they have been very kind to the masculine, by shewing the world there can be something worse.

16. 'TIS said there want not some who compleat the demonstration, by the other parallel quality of Drinking also ; a vice detestable in all, but prodigious in Women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance, the other in the immodesty. And though they may take their immediate copy from Men, yet (to the praise of their proficiency) they out-do their Exemplar,
and

and draw near the Original: nothing humane being so much beast as a drunken Woman. This is evident enough if we look only on the mere surface of the crime; but if we dive farther into it's inferences and adherences, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is first a prostitute to Wine, will soon be to Lust also: she has dismiss'd her Guards, discarded all the suggestions of Reason, as well as Grace, and is at the mercy of any, of every assailant. And when we consider how much fuller the world is of *Ammons* than *Josephs*, it will not be hard to guess the fate of that woman's Chastity, which has no other bottom than that of mens. So that unless her vice secure her vertue, and the loathsomeness of the one prevent attempts on the other, 'tis scarce imaginable a woman that loses her Sobriety should keep her Honesty. So that indeed I might more properly have made this reflection, when I come to speak of Modesty in the second notion of it, as it is oppos'd to Lightness and Wantonness; but it falls not much amiss now to be the introduction to it.

17. AND if we consider Modesty in this sense, we shall find it the most indispensable requisite of a woman, a thing so essential and natural to the Sex, that every the least declination from it, is a proportionable receding from Woman-hood; but the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay sets them

as

as far beneath those, as an acquir'd vileness is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts, either of the Philosophers or Divines in the case, it being so much an instinct of nature, that though too many make a shift to suppress it in themselves, yet they cannot so darken the notion in others, but that an Impudent Woman is lookt on as a kind of Monster, a thing diverted and distorted from it's proper form. That there is indeed a strange repugnancy to nature, needs no other evidence than the struggling, and difficulty in the first violations of Modesty, which always begin with regrets and blushes, and require a great deal of Self-denial, much of vitious Fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

18. I make no doubt but this Age has arriv'd to as compendious arts of this kind, as industrious vice can suggest, and we have but too many instances of early proficient in this learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardest of them, whether at first they could not with more ease have kept their vertue than lost it. Certainly such are the Horrors and Shames that precede those first Guilts, that they must commit a rape upon themselves, (force their own reluctancies and averfions) before they can become willing prostitutes to others. This their Seducers seem well to understand, and upon that score are at the pains

pains of so many preparatory courtings, such expence of presents too; as if this were so uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it, but by a confederacy of some more familiar vices, their Pride or Covetousness.

19. THE best way therefore to counter-mine those Stratagems of Men, is for Women to be suspiciously vigilant even of the first approaches. He that means to defend a Fort, must not abandon the Out-works; and she that will secure her Chastity, must never let it come to too close a siege, but repel the very first and most remote insinuations of a Tempter. Therefore when we speak of Modesty in our present notion of it, we are not to oppose it only to the grosser act of Incontinency; but to all those misbehaviours, which either discover, or may create any inclination to it; of which sort is all Lightness of carriage, wanton glances, obscene discourse; things that shew a Woman so weary of her honour, that the next comer may reasonably expect a surrender, and consequently be invited to the Assault. Indeed they are such, that one would rather think them the result of many acts, than merely the Prologue to one; and that nothing but a custom of private sin could supply impudence enough to do what is so publickly scandalous: and where this is found in those of any considerable Age, charity it self can scarce pass a milder censure. Yet possibly in

those of the youngest sort, they may at first be taken up (as their dress is) merely in imitation of others, embrac'd implicitly upon the authority of those, whose examples govern the modes. When a poor girl, who has still so much of the child, as to admire every thing that glitters, sees these things us'd by the gay people of the world, 'tis no wonder if she takes these as part of their accomplishments, and, upon peril of that formidable calamity of being unfashionable, conform to them. Which yet do's not so much extenuate the guilt of those few seduc'd persons, as it aggravates that of the seducers, and attests, the strange corruption of the age, that those things which the less harden'd sort of prostitutes were formerly asham'd of, should now pass into the frequency and avowedness of a fashion, become a part of Discipline and Institution of Youth; as if vice now disdain'd to have any punies in it's School, and therefore by a preposterous anticipation makes it's pupils begin where they were wont to end; initiates them at first into that shamelessness, which was wont to be the product only of a long habit. What the end will be of these Piqueerers in impudence, who thus put their vertue on the forlorn hope, is easy to divine. Yet is not this the only state of danger: they who keep their ranks, and tho' they do not provoke assaults yet stay to receive them, may be far enough from

from safety. She that lends a patient ear to the praises of her Wit or Beauty, intends at first perhaps only to gratify her vanity: but when she is once charm'd with that Sirens song, bewitcht with that Flattery, she insensibly declines to a kindness for that person that values her so much: and when that spark shall be blow'd up by perpetual remonstrances of Passion, and perhaps little Romantick artifices of pretending to die for her, with a thousand other tricks, which Lust can suggest, 'twill, like the *Naphtha* Naturalists speak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruine both of her vertue and honour.

20. LET no woman therefore presume upon the innocence of her first intentions; she may as well, upon confidence of a sound constitution, enter a pest-house, and converse with the plague, whose contagion do's not more subtedly insinuate it self, than this sort of temptation. And as in that case she would not stay to define what were the critical distance, at which she might approach with safety, but would run as far from it as she could; so in this, it no less concerns her to remove her self from the possibility of danger, and (how unfashionable soever it be) to put on such a severe Modesty, that her very looks should guard her, and discourage the most impudent assailant. 'Tis said of *Philopamen*, that the *La-*

cedemonians finding it their interest to corrupt him with money, they were yet so possess'd with the reverence of his virtues, that none durst undertake to attack him; and sure 'twere not impossible for women to arrive at the same security: such an authority there is in Vertue, that where 'tis eminent, 'tis apt to controll all loose desires; and he must be not only lustful but sacrilegious, that attempts to violate such a Sanctuary.

21. BUT perhaps that Sex may fear, that by putting on such a strictness, they shall loose the glory of their Beauty, which is now chiefly estimated by the number of those who court and adore them. To this in the first place I must say, that they are miserable Trophies to Beauty, that must be built on the ruins of Vertue and Honour; and she that to boast the length of her hair should hang her self in it, would but act the same folly in a lower instance.

22. BUT then secondly, 'tis a great mistake to think their Beauty shall be less priz'd, since 'tis incident to man's nature to esteem those things most that are at a distance, whereas an easie and cheap descent begets contempt. So long as they govern themselves by the exact rules of Prudence and Modesty, their lustre is like the Meridian Sun in it's clearness, which tho' less approachable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from those,

those, they are like that Sun in a cloud, which, tho' safelier gaz'd on, is not half so bright. But besides these collateral advantages, 'tis certain that Modesty gives an immediate and direct improvement to Beauty; for tho' men for their own vicious ends wish them sever'd, yet they cannot but think, they are the most amiable when united, and you shall hear them often commend the aspect of that Modesty; which they would fain circumvent.

23. BUT in the third place, there is nothing but such a reservedness, that can indeed make their Beauty triumphant. Parly and Conquest are the most distant things; and she that descends to treat with an assailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, 'tis but in order to the making her his; which when she once is, there is no state of servitude half so wretched, nothing in the world being so slavishly abject as a prostitute Woman. For besides all the interest of another life, which she basely resigns, she sacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation she puts wholly in his power that has debauch'd her; and, which is worse, her reformation too. If she should have a mind to return to virtue, she dares not, for fear he should divulge her former strayings from it: so that, like *Catiline*, she is engag'd to future evils to secure the past. Yea, she subjects her self, not only to his lust, but to all his humors and fancies; nay even to
all

all those who have been instrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be displeas'd for fear of blabbing : and when 'tis remembred, what a sort of cattle they are, which are the engines in such affairs, there can scarce be any thing more deplorable, than to be within their lash. 'Tis true indeed, some have found a way to cure this uneasiness by being their own delators, not only confessing, but boasting their crime, and by an impudent owning, prevent all accusations: yet even this serves but to attest the intolerableness of the former condition, when this worst of mischiefs is chose as a rescue. Their impatience of being always in awe, makes them take up that resolution for infamy, which *Cæsar* did for death; who said, 'Twas better to die once than to be always in fear. And tho' this desperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it ascertains the reproach; for, whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may prompt some to disbelieve it, yet when the fact is justified by the offender, the evidence is uncontrollable, and withal doubles the infamy. For, besides that which adheres to the crime, there is a distinct portion due to the impudence; yet, like the Scorpion, it must cure it's own sting, and tho' it increases the obloquy, yet it deadens the sense of it.

24. BUT when they have thus steel'd their fore-heads against all impressions of shame, they are still liable to many other painful effects of their sin. What fears of being abandon'd, what jealousies of rivals do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the same humour of variety, which engag'd their Paramours in their love, may do the same for another, and another, and so on: it being as possible to grasp the air, as to confine a wandering lust. Besides, what anxious apprehensions have they of the approach of age, which they are sure will render them loath'd and despicable, as also of all intermediate decays of Beauty? How critically do they examine their glass? and every wrinkle, that represents in their face, becomes a deep gash in the heart. But if they have at any time the leisure (or indeed the courage) to look inward, the view is yet more dreadful, a deform'd soul, spoil'd of it's innocence, and render'd almost as brutish as the sin it has consented to. But tho' it be in some respect *like the Beast that perish*, it is not, it cannot be in that which would most avail it: an endless being it cannot lose, nor can it expect any thing from that preeminence of it's nature, but an infinity of misery. This is such an amazing contemplation, as methinks, were it insist'd on, should allay the hottest blood; no impure flames being so fierce,

fierce, as to contest with those of unquenchable fire. It is therefore, tho' a very impious, yet no unskilful artifice of those who would vitiate women in their manners, to corrupt them in their Principles; and by extinguishing all hopes or fears of another world, persuade them to immerse boldly into all the abominations of this. 'Tis said, this is now an art of wooing, the modern prelude to the basest proposals: it seems, this age dares not trust only to the former ways of seducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the interests of another World; and therefore is fain to set up a new party of others to disbelieve it. And I fear that design has been too prosperous: many women are so much more concern'd for their bodies than their souls, that they are contented the one should be elevated upon the depression and debasement of the other; and whilst with a vain transport, they can hear their outward form applauded as Angelical, or Divine, they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and despised, defin'd to be only a puff of air in their nostrils, which will scatter with their expiring breath, or in the Atheist's Phrase, *Wisd. 2. 3. vanish as the soft air*. Whereas they should consider, that they who preach this doctrine to them, design it only to infer a pernicious use. 'Tis a Maxim in Politicks, that those Counsels are suspiciously to be scan'd,

scan'd, which carry in their front the advisers interest; which certainly is never more visible than in this case; he that once gains this point, never needing to contest for all the rest. For he that can perswade a woman out of her Soul, will soon command her Body; and then what was at first his interest, becomes hers at last; and her wishes of the mortality of her Soul are much stronger than 'tis possible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the servile, wretched condition of such a person. For if we judge that a very severe slavery, which makes people desirous to resign a temporal being, what shall we think of that which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

25. AND now by this gradation of mischiefs, we may judge of the deplorable state of those who have abandon'd their Vertue; wherein I doubt not the consciences of many cannot only attest, but may improve the description; and all I shall say to such, is only to consult that bosom monitor; which till they do, all Homilies will be insignificant. My design was not therefore to tell them what they too well feel, but only to point out their wrecks as warnings to others.

26. LET all those therefore, who are yet untainted, and, by being so, have their judgments clear and unbiaſt, consider soberly the misery of the other condition, and that not

D

only

only to applaud, but secure their own; and when ever the outward pomps and gaudy splendours of a vitiated Woman, seem, like that of *Cræsus*, to boast their happiness; let them look through that Fallacy, and answer with *Solon*, *that those only are happy, who are so at their end*. Their most exquisite deckings are but like the garlands on a beast design'd for Sacrifice; their richest gems are but the chains, not of their ornament but slavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putred body, (for even that doth not seldom prove their fate) or however, a more putrid Soul. They who can thus consider them, will avoid one great snare; for 'tis not always so much the lust of the flesh, as that of the eyes, which betrays a Woman. 'Tis the known infirmity of the Sex, to love gayety, and a splendid appearance, which renders all temptations of that sort so connatural to them, that those who are not arriv'd to a more sober estimate of things, will scarce be secure. It will therefore be necessary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all such things to their just value, and then they will appear so trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more solid interests of Virtue and Honour. For tho' those terms seem in this loose Age to be exploded; yet where the things are visible, they extort a secret veneration, even from those
who

who think it their concern publickly to deride them: whereas on the other side a defection from them exposes to all the contempt imaginable, renders them despis'd even by those who betray'd them to it, leaves a perpetual blot upon their Names, and their Family. For in the character of a Woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female accomplishments stand in the front; yet if wantonness bring up the rear, the Satyr soon devours the Panegyrick, and, as in an Echo, the last words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembred when all the rest will be forgot. But I need not declame upon this theme; the Son of *Syrach* has done it to my hand, in many passages, but especially *Ecclus. 23.* to which I refer the Reader.

27. WHAT hath been already said, is, I suppose, sufficient to convince every Woman how much it is her concern to keep her self strictly within the bounds of Modesty and Vertue. In order to which, there is nothing more important than a judicious choice of her Company; I mean not only for men, but women also. Vice is contagious, and this especially has that worst quality of the Plague, that, 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A Woman that knows her self scandalous, thinks she is reproach'd by the Vertue of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her ways*, as it is, *Wisd. 2. 14.* and there-

fore, in her own defence, strives to level the inequality, not by reforming her self, (that she thinks too hard a task) but by corrupting the other. To this end such as are willing to screw themselves into an acquaintance, will be officiously kind, and by all arts of condescension and obliging, endeavour to ensnare a Woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they succeed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb-friendship; they then, spider-like, infuse their venom, never leave their vile insinuations, till they have poison'd and ruin'd her. But if, on the other side, they meet with one of too much sagacity to be entrap'd; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endeavour to blast her Fame; represent her to the World to be what they would have made her, that is in the Psalmist's phrase, *such a one as themselves*, Psalm 50. 24. so that there is no conversing with them, but with a manifest peril either of Vertue or Honour, which should, methinks, be a sufficient dissuasive. 'Tis true, 'tis not always in ones power to shun the meeting with such persons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unless, as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 5. 10. *one shall go out of the World*. But all voluntary converse supposes a choice, and therefore every body, that will, may refrain that, may keep on the utmost frontiers of civility, without ever suffering any approach towards intimacy and familiarity.

28. AND sure, were this distance duly observ'd, it might be of excellent use, a kind of Lay-Excommunication, which might come very seasonably to supply the want of the Ecclesiastick now out-dated. And this seems very well to agree with the sense of *Solon*, the wise *Athenian* Law-giver, who, besides that he shut the Temple-doors against them, interdicted them the sacred Assemblies; made it one of his Laws, that an Adulterers should not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that so they might in their dress, carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like distinction observ'd, I fear many of our gayest birds would be unplum'd: and tho' the same be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good use. For, besides that already mention'd of securing the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with some shame on themselves, if they were thus singled out and discriminated; whereas, whilst they are suffer'd to mix with the best Societies, (like hurt Deer in an herd) they flatter themselves they are undiscernable.

29. BUT indeed the advantage of this course is yet more extensive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now seems to lie under a general scandal, for the fault of particular persons. We know any considerable number of smutty ears, cast a blackness on the whole field,

field, which yet, were they apart, would perhaps not fill a small corner of it: and in this uncharitable Age, things are apt to be denominated, not from the greater, but worser part: whereas were the precious sever'd from the vile, by some note of distinction, there might then a more certain estimate be made: and I cannot be so severe to woman-kind, as not to believe the scandalous part would then make but a small shew, which now makes so great a noise.

30. BESIDES this I can suggest but one way more for Women of Honour to vindicate their Sex, and that is by making their own Vertue as illustrious as they can; and by the bright shine of that, draw off men's eyes from the worser prospect: And to this there is requir'd, not only innocence, but prudence; to abstain, as from all real evil, *so from every appearance of it too*, 1 *Theff.* 5. 22. Not by any doubtful or suspicious Action, to give any umbrage for censure, but as the Apostle says in another case, 2 *Cor.* 11. 11. *To cut off occasion from them that desire occasion*; to deny themselves the most innocent liberties, when any scandalous inference is like to be deduc'd from them. And tho' perhaps no caution is enough to secure them against the malicious and the jealous, tho' 'tis possible some black mouth may asperse them, yet they have still *Plato's* reserve, who being told of some, who had defam'd

fam'd him, *'Tis no matter*, said he, *I will live so that none shall believe them.* If their lives be such, that they may acquit themselves to the sober and unprejudic'd, they have all the security can be aspir'd to in this world; the more evincing attestation they must attend from the unerring Tribunal hereafter; where there lies a certain appeal for all injur'd persons, who can calmly wait for it.



SECT.



SECT. II.

Of Meekness.

I. **I**N the next place we may rank Meekness as a necessary feminine Vertue; this even nature seems to teach, which abhors monstrosities and disproportions, and therefore having allotted to Women a more smooth and soft composition of body, infers thereby her intention, that the mind should correspond with it. For tho' the adulterations of Art, can represent in the same face beauty in one position, and deformity in another; yet nature is more sincere, and never meant a serene and clear forehead, should be the frontispiece to a cloudy tempestuous heart. 'Tis therefore to be wish'd they would take the admonition, and whilst they consult their glasses, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would cast one look inwards, and examine what symmetry there is held with a fair outside,

side, whether any storm of passion darken and overcast their interiour beauty, and use at least an equal diligence to rescue that, as they would to clear their face from any stain or blemish.

2. BUT it is not nature only which suggests this, but the God of nature too, Meekness being not only recommended to all as a Christian Vertue, but particularly enjoined to Women as a peculiar accomplishment of their Sex, 1 *Pet.*

3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquisite and costly deckings of art, this one ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is confronted to them, with this eminent attestation, that it is *in the sight of God of great price*; and therefore to all, who will not enter dispute with God, and contest his judgment, it must be so too. Now, tho' Meekness be in it self a single Vertue, yet it is diversifi'd, according to the several faculties of the Soul, over which it has influence; so that there is a Meekness of the Understanding, a Meekness of the Will, and a Meekness of the Affections; all which must concur to make up the meek and quiet spirit.

3. AND first for the Meekness of the Understanding; it consists in a pliability to conviction, and is directly opposite to that fullen adherence observable in too many; who judge of tenets, not by their conformity to truth and reason, but to their prepossessions, and tenaciously retain'd opinions; only because they (or

E

some

some in whom they confide) have once own'd them; and certainly such a temper is of all others the most obstructive to Wisdom. This puts them upon the chance of a Lottery, and what they first happen to draw, determines them merely upon the privilege of it's precedence: so that, had *Mahomet* first seiz'd them, his tenure would have been as indefeasible as Christ's now. How great the force of such prejudices is, we may see by the oppositions it rais'd against Christian Doctrine in gross at it's first promulgation; the Jews blind zeal for the Traditions of their Fathers, engaging them in the murder even of that very Messias, whom those Traditions had taught them to expect, and after, in the persecution of that Doctrine, which his Resurrection had so irrefragably attested. And to justify the propriety of this observation to those I now write to, 'tis expressly affirm'd *Acts* 13. 50. that they made use of the zeal of the female Proselytes for that purpose. *The Jews stir'd up the devout and honourable Women, and rais'd a persecution against Paul and Barnabas.* So that 'tis no unseasonable advice to such, to be sure they see well their way before they run too fierce a career in it, otherwise the greatest heat without light, do's but resemble that of the bottomless pit, where flames and darkness do at once co-habit.

4. BUT whilst I decry this prejudicate stiffness, I intend not to plead for it's contrary extreme

treme, and recommend a too easy Flexibility, which is a temper of equal, if not more ill consequence than the former. The adhering to one opinion, can expose but to one error; but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may successively entertain a whole ocean of delusions; and to be thus yielding, is not a Meekness, but servileness of Understanding. Indeed 'tis so great a weakness of mind, that the Apostle sinks it somewhat below the impotence of Women, and resembles it to that of children, *Ephes. 4. 14.* Yet it seems the folly of some Women had levell'd them with children in this matter: for the same Apostle takes notice of such, to whom as he gives the Epithet of *filly*, so the latter part of the character speaks them incorrigibly so, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, 2 Tim. 3. 7.* a description, which if we compare with our times, we must think Prophetick. For, how many instances hath this age given us of Women so led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or seduc'd by the pretended zeal of a new teacher, have given up their understandings to him: and for a while this strong Man has kept possession; but when a stronger than he hath come, it has far'd as with him in the Gospel, a louder Zeal or a newer Doctrine soon divides his spoils; and that by force of the very same principle, on which he set up; which, within

a while, undermines the latter also, and so successively, 'till the poor profelyte has been hurried through all the mazes of wild error, and at last perhaps (like a palate distracted by too much variety) she fixes upon that which at first she most decry'd. This has been eventually true in some, who setting out the fiercest detestation of Popery, have wander'd so long like the blinded *Syrians*, *2 Kings* 6. 20. that they have at last found themselves in the midst of *Samaria*; by an insensible circular motion, been brought about to that Religion, from which alone they design'd to fly. So little do itching ears know whither they may be carry'd. And indeed the ear, when infected with that pruriant humour, may vie mischiefs with the tongue, which St. *James* tells us, *Chap.* 3. 6. is (tho' a little member) *a world of iniquity*.

5. 'Tis therefore the most important concern of all, to fortify that so assailable part; but 'tis especially so of Women, not only in respect of that natural imbecility, which renders them liable to seducement; but also because the opinion of their being so, makes them particularly aim'd at by seducers. For as he who is to put off adulterated wares, will choose the most unwary Chapmen; so these Sophistours of Divinity, desire the most undiscerning auditors. And truly that so many of that Sex are so, I do not so much impute to any natural defect, as to the loose notions they have of
Reli-

Religion, of which they have perhaps some general confus'd apprehensions; but have so little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Christians* rather than *Turks*, why of the Church of *England* rather than that of *Rome* or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unfixed, and have no better principle than Custom and compliance; they have nothing to answer to any the grossest deceit that can be obtruded upon them, which for ought they know or have consider'd, may be as true as any thing they formerly profess'd. Now when any one in this condition shall be assaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of false teachers, but also by ingeminated threatnings of Hell and Damnation; she is like one awak'd by the out-cry of fire, and in that amaze, will be apt to run where-ever the first discoverer of her danger shall lead her.

6. I shall therefore most earnestly recommend it as the best Antidote against the poison of novel Doctrines, to examine well the grounds of the old. For want of this it is, that our Church has been expos'd to so many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverse Pride of human Nature, to speak evil of things we understand not. And had our she-zealots first consulted some sober guides, and from them understood upon what grounds the Practice, as well as Doctrine of our Church, was founded, they could not so easily have been

been carried away by *every wind of Doctrine*, as the Apostle phrases it, *Eph. 4. 14.*

7. INDEED this is no more than common justice exacts, which forbids the condemning even the vilest malefactor unheard: (and unheard and not understood, are in this case terms equivalent) yet sure they owe something more to that Church, from whose Ministry themselves must confess to have deriv'd their Christianity, in whose bosom they have been cherish'd, and which consequently may plead a mother's right in them. So that unless possession, which fortifies civil rights, destroys the Ecclesiastick; she may challenge besides that natural justice (which is the common due of Humanity) a parental respect and reverence, a debt which is sure very ill answer'd by those who cast off her obedience before they have at all consider'd, what it is she commands. And, if the abdicating a child be a thing so unnatural, as needs some very important cause to justify it; the renouncing of a Parent, must require a reason as far transcending that, as the guilt do's, if it be causeless, and such it must inevitably be in all, who, for want of due examination, suffer themselves to be led into groundless prejudices and disgusts.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which spring from it, I must again repeat my proposal, that Women of *Quality* (who are presum'd to want neither parts nor
leisure

leisure for it) would a little look into the inside of the Religion they profess : if it be a true one, 'twill bear the inspection, truth never shunning the light ; if it be not, the discovery cannot be too early. And indeed among the many remarkable impresses of truth our Church bears, this is one, that she do's not blindfold her Profelytes, but leaves them the use of their discerning Faculty, and do's not by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their Reason when they take up their Faith. And now why should not Ladies spend a few of their many idle hours in this inquisition. I mean, not to embark themselves in a maze of controversies ; but only to discern those plain grounds of Truth on which our Church builds ; which, if well digested, will prove a better Amulet against delusion, than the reading whole *Tomes* of disputations, more apt to distract than fortify their understandings. And had they thus done, had their minds been ballasted by sober principles, so many of them had never made up the triumphs of so many and so various seducers. And tho' to such this advertisement may come too late, (like assistance after a defeat) yet it may be a seasonable caution to others : and to those I offer it, as that very temper, wherein consists that Rational Meekness of the Understanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind Obstinacy, or as blind a Flexibility.

9. A SECOND sort of Meekness is that of the Will, which lies in it's just subordination and submission to a more supreme Authority, which in Divine things is the Will of God; in Natural or Moral, right Reason; and in human Constitutions, the command of Superiours. And so long as the Will governs it self by these in their respective Orders, it transgresses not the Meekness requir'd of it. But experience attests, that the Will is now in it's depravation and imperious Faculty, apt to cast off that subjection, to which it was design'd, and act independently from those motives which should influence it. This, God knows, is too common in all Ages, all Conditions and Sexes: but the Feminine lies more especially under an ill name for it. Whether that has grown from the low opinion conceiv'd of their Reason, less able to maintain it's Empire, or from the multiply'd habitual instances themselves have given of unruly Wills, I shall not undertake to determine; but either way, 'tis I am sure, so great a reproach as they should be very industrious to wipe it off. And truly I know nothing more incentive to that endeavour, than the having a right estimate of the Happiness, as well as Vertue of a governable Will. How calmly do those glide through all (even the roughest) events, that can but master that stubborn Faculty? A Will resign'd to God's how do's it enervate and enfeeble any calamity?

ty? Nay indeed it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains it, may be said to command even what it suffers. 'Twas a Philosophical Maxim, that a Wise Moral Man could not be injur'd, could not be miserable; but sure 'tis much more true of him, who has that Divine Wisdom of Christian resignation, that twists and in-wraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazards of his own elections; but is secure, that unless Omniscience can be deceiv'd, or Omnipotence defeated, he shall have what is really best for him.

10. PROPORTIONABLE (tho' not equal) to this, is the happiness of a Will regulated by reason in things within it's Sphere: 'tis the Dignity of human Nature, and that which distinguishes it from that of Beasts. Yea, even those grow more contemptible in their kinds, the farther they are remov'd from it. The stupid sturdiness of an Ass has render'd it proverbial for folly, when the tractableness of other Animals has tempted some to list them among Rationals. Besides, reason affords something of a Basis and Foundation for the Will to bottom on. He that governs himself by Reason (that being still the same) will act equally and consonant to himself; but he that do's a thing this moment, only because he will, may the next have as weighty an argument to do something quite contrary, and so may

F spend

spend his whole time in unravelling his *Spiders web*, as the Prophet rightly calls the vain designs of such brutish Men, *Isa.* 59. 5. Not to speak of the recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties, which are the uneasy attendants of those, who resist their more direct admonitions; there is nothing exposes to more secular ruins. An ungovernable Will, is the most precipitous thing imaginable, and, like the Devil in the Swine, hurries headlong to destruction; and yet deprives one of that poor reserve, that faint comfort of the miserable, Pity; which will not be so much invited by the misery, as averted by that wilfulness which caus'd it. Nay indeed, so little can such persons expect the compassion of others, that 'twill be hard for them to afford themselves their own; the consciousness that their calamities are but the issues of their own perverseness being apt to dispose them, more to hate than pity. And this is no small accumulation of wretchedness, when a man suffers, not only directly, but at the rebound too; re-inflicts his miseries upon himself, by a grating reflection on his own madness. Yea, so great an aggravation is it, that even Hell it self is enhanc'd and compleated by it; all the torments there being edg'd and sharpen'd by the woful remembrance, that they might once have been avoided.

11. IN the last place, a Will duly submissive

five to lawful Superiours, is not only an amiable thing in the eyes of others, but exceedingly happy to ones self; 'tis the parent of peace and order, both publick and private; a blessing so considerable, as is very cheaply bought with a little receding from ones own will or humour; whereas the contrary temper is the spring and original of infinite confusions, the grand incendiary, which sets Kingdoms, Churches, Families, in combustion; a flat contradiction, not only to the word, but even the works of God; a kind of Anticreative power, which reduces things to that Chaos, from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many, and too pregnant instances of it's mischievous effects, which may serve to enhance the value of that governable, malleable temper, I now recommend. And as a Will thus resign'd to Reason and just Authority, is a felicity, all Rational Natures should aspire to; so especially the Feminine Sex, whose passions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more strictly guarded, and kept under the severe discipline of Reason: for where 'tis otherwise, where a Woman has no guide but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her humour: the event is sure to be fatal to her self, and often to others also.

12. AND the hazard of this renders that other restraint of the Will, I mean that of

obedience to Superiours, a very happy imposition; tho', perhaps, 'tis not always thought so: for those who resist the government of Reason, are not very apt to submit to that of Authority. Yet, sure God and Nature do attest the particular expediency of this to Women, by having plac'd that Sex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay farther 'tis observable, that, as there are but three states of life, through which they can regularly pass, *viz.* Virginity, Marriage, and Widow-hood; two of them are states of Subjection, the first to the Parent, the second to the Husband; and the third, as it is casual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, so if they do, we find it by God himself reckon'd as a condition the most desolate and deplorable. If I should say this happens upon that very score, that they are left to their own guidance, the sad wracks of many would too much justify the gloss: but, however it evinces, that God sets not the same value upon their being masterless, which some of them do, whilst he reckons them most miserable, when they are most at liberty.

13. AND, since God's assignation has thus determin'd subjection to be the Women's lot, there needs no other argument of it's fitness; or for their acquiescence. Therefore whenever they oppose it, the contumacy flies higher than the immediate Superior, and reaches
God

God himself. And, I am apt to think there would not many of that timorous Sex dare so far, were it not for some false punctilio's of honour, which (like those among our Duellists) they have impos'd on themselves. These represent Meekness and Submission, as a silly sheepish quality, unfit for Women of breeding and spirit: whilst an imperious obstinacy passes for nobleness and greatness of Mind. But alas! they are wofully mistaken in their notion of a great spirit, which consists in scorning to do unworthy and vile things, and courageously encountering the adverse events of life; not in spurning at duty, or seeking to pull themselves from that Sphere, where the Divine Wisdom hath plac'd them. No sure, stubbornness is the mark only of a great stomach, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward, may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableness of a Woman can speak her generous.

14. IN this I presume, I speak the common sense of all: for what value soever they put upon themselves, nothing renders them less acceptable to others; an imperious Woman being a plague to her relations, and a derision to strangers, yea and a torment to her self: every the least contradiction (which a meek person would pass over insensibly) inflaming such an unruly temper, and transporting her to such extravagancies, as often produce very mis-

mischievous effects. On the other side, if she be humour'd and comply'd with, that serves only to make her more insolent and intolerable; makes her humours grow to such an height, that she knows not her self what would please her, and yet expects that others should: so that to such a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* said of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquish'd, he never gave rest to himself, nor if he were victorious, to others. Certainly the uneasiness of a perverse spirit is so great, that, could such come but to compare it with the calm and happy serenity of Meekness and Obedience, there would need no other Lecture to commend them to their esteem or practice.

15. THE last branch of Meekness is that of the Affections, and consists in reducing the passions to a temper and calmness, not suffering them to make uproars within to disturb ones self, nor without, to the disquieting of others; and to this regulation, Meekness is generally subservient. Yet because the correcting of some particular passions is more immediately assignable to others vertues, I shall only insist upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean Anger, a two-edg'd passion, which, whilst it deals it's blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry Man feels, is far more painful, than any thing he can ordinarily inflict

inflict upon another : herein justifying the Epithet usually given to Anger, that it is a short madness ; for, who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater mischief to do a less ? It is indeed so great a distemper of the mind, that he that is possess'd with it, is incompetent for any sober undertaking, and should as much be suspended from acting, as one in a Phrensy or Lunacy. This was the judgement and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chastise a servant, and finding himself grow angry, stopt his correction ; a friend coming in, and asking what he was doing, *punishing*, replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himself unfit to discipline another, 'till he had subdu'd his own passion. Another time his slave having offended him, *I would beat thee*, says he, *but that I am angry*. It were endless indeed to recite the black Epithets given by all Moralists to this vice. It shall suffice to take the suffrage of the Wifest of Men, one that had acquainted himself to *know madness and folly*, *Eccl. 1. 17.* and we find it his sentence, that *anger rests in the bosom of fools*, *Eccl. 7. 9.*

16. AND, what is thus universally unbecoming to human nature, cannot sure be less indecent for the gentler Sex : 'tis rather more so every thing contracting so much more of deformity, by how much it recedes from it's proper kind. Now nature hath befriended Women with a more cool and temperate constitution,

stitution, put less of fire, and consequently of choler, in their compositions; so that their heats of that kind, are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by fancy or pride, and so both look more unhandsomly, and have less of pretence to veil and cover them. Besides, Women have a native feebleness, unable to back and assert their angers with any effective force, which may admonish them, 'twas never intended they should let loose to that passion, which nature seems, by that very inability, to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themselves at once despis'd and abhorr'd; nothing being more ridiculously hateful, than an impotent rage.

17. BUT as the most feeble insect may sometimes disturb, tho' not much hurt us, so there is one feminine weapon, which, as 'tis always ready, so proves often troublesome, I mean the tongue, which, tho' in it's loudest clamours, can naturally invade nothing but the ear; yet even that is a molestation. The barking of a dog, tho' we are secure he cannot bite, is a grating unpleasant sound; and while Women seek that way to vent their rage, they are but a sort of speaking brutes, and should consider whether that does not reflect more contempt upon themselves, than their most virulent reproaches can fix upon others.

18. BUT some things have had the luck to acquire a formidableness no body knows how:
and

and sure there is no greater instance of it than in this case. A clamorous Woman is look'd on, tho' not with reverence, yet with much dread, and we often find things done to prevent or appease her storms, which would be deny'd to the calm and rational desires of a meeker person. And perhaps such successes have not been a little accessory to the fomenting the humour: yet sure it gives them little cause of triumph, when they consider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human society. Let them take the verdict of *Solomon*, who declares *it better to dwell in a corner of a house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house, Prov. 25. 24.* Nor do's the son of *Sirach* speak less sharply, though more ironically, *Ecclus. 26. 27. A loud crying woman and a scold, shall be sought out to drive away the enemy.* And tho' he taxes the feminine vices impartially enough, yet there is scarce any of them which he more often and more severely brands, than this of unquietness. It seems, 'twas a thing generally look'd on as very unsufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who, when he design'd to discipline himself to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exercise, than to get a shrew to his wife; an excellence that may perhaps again recommend a Woman, when we fall into an Age of Philosophers; but at present 'twill be hard for any of our *Xantippe's* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as destru-

ctive to their interests in getting husband's as it is to the husband's quiet, when he is got. But, I presume, I need not declame farther against this fault, which, I suppose, cannot be frequent among that rank of Women, for whom this Tract is intended: for if neither moral nor divine Considerations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a gentile Education hath: a scold being a creature to be look'd for only in Stalls and Markets, not among persons of quality. Yet if there be any that have descended to so fordid a practice, they have so far degraded themselves, that they are not to wonder if others substract that respect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

19. AND to such I should recommend the usual method of Physick, which is to cure by revulsion: let that sharp humour which so habitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoil, and work inward; and instead of reviling others, discipline and correct themselves: let them upbraid their own madness, that to gratify an impotent, nay a most painfull passion, they have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education design'd them. And if they can thus reverse their displeasures, 'twill not only secure others from all their indecent assaults; but it will at last extinguish them. For Anger is corrosive, and if it be kept only to feed upon it's self, must be
it's

it's own devourer ; if it be permitted to fetch no forrage from without nor to nourish it self with suspicions and surmises of others, nor to make any sallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

20. AND how much they will herein consult their interest and their reputation too, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the distinctive *sign of a foolish woman to be clamorous*, *Prov. 9. 13.* whereas, when he gives the character of his excellent Woman, he links Wisdom and Gentleness together: *She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness*, *Prov. 31. 26.* If this verdict may be admitted, (as sure it ought, whether we consider his wisdom, or dear bought experience in Women) it will confute the common plea of querulous spirits, who think that to seem insensible of any the least provocation, is to appear silly and stupid ; though truly if it were so, 'twould be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the transport of their fury.

21. TO conclude, Meekness is so amiable, so indearing a quality, and so peculiarly embellishing to Women, that did they but all consider it, with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, 'twould certainly be taken up as the universal mode, in all the several variations of it, this Section has presented.



SECT. III.

Of Compassion.

F near Affinity to the Vertue of Meekness, is that of Mercy and Compassion, which indeed can scarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepar'd the soil : Anger and Obstinacy being like that rough East-wind, which brought the *Egyptian* Locusts, *Exod.* 10. 13. to eat up every green thing in the Land. A mind harass'd with it's own impatency, is not at leisure to observe, much less to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more distinct prospect of distant Objects ; so when all is quiet and serene within us, we can then look about

us,

us, and discern what exigencies of others invite our pities.

2. I need not say much to raise an estimate of this Vertue, since 'tis so essential to our Nature, so interwoven in the composition of Humanity, that we find in Scripture phrase, Compassion is generally seated in the most inward sensible part of our frame, the bowels. So *Col. 3. 12. Put on therefore bowels of mercy:* and *Philip. 2. 1. Bowels and mercies.* So that a cruel ruthless person unmans himself, and is by the common vote of mankind to be listed among brutes; nay, not among the better, but only the more hateful, noxious sort of them.

3. BUT, this is yet more unnatural in the female Sex, which being of a softer mould, is more plyant and yielding to the impressions of pity, and by this strength of fancy, redoubles the horror of any sad object. Yea, so remarkable is their tenderness, that, God, when he would most magnify his own compassion, illustrates it by that of Women, as the highest human instance. Indeed, such a propension have Women to commiseration, that they are usually taxed with an excess in it, so that any imprudent lenity is proverbially call'd, A Womanish Pity: and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can scarce avoid. But to this I answer, first, That in this degenerate Age, 'tis no news to see people violate their instincts,

as

as well as their duties, and be worse than their nature inclines them; many sins being committed even against the grain, and with violence to the constitution.

4. YET secondly, 'tis not a mere melting of the eyes, or yerning of the bowels, I design to recommend, Alas! their tears will not be drink to a thirsty soul, nor will shivering at his nakedness cloath him. This is such an insignificant mercy, as St. *James* describes, saying to a brother or sister, *be ye warm'd, be ye fill'd but not giving them things needful to the body, Chap. 2. 16.* Indeed, she that weeps over those distresses she will not relieve, might have been fit to be enter'd in the list of the mourning Women among the Jews and Heathens, who were hir'd to make up the tragick Pomp of Funerals with their mercenary sorrow; but had no real concern in that loss they seem'd to bewail. 'Tis therefore a more active sort of Compassion, to which I would invite them; and yet for method's sake, I shall consider it under two distinct Heads; Giving, and Forgiving.

5. BY Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (tho' that prudently bounded, is an excellence well becoming persons of Fortune) but only such a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is apply'd to succour their indigencies. To give to those, from whom they may expect returns, may be a design; but at the best can be but generosity and frankness

ness of humour. 'Tis only then mercy (as Christ himself has defin'd it) when it is to those, from whom they can *hope for nothing again*.

6. AND in this Vertue Women have, in former Ages, eminently excell'd: yea, so essential was it, that we find *Solomon* thought not their character compleat without it; but numbers it among the properties of his Vertuous Woman, *Prov. 31. 20. She stretcheth forth her hand to the poor; and reacheth forth her hand to the needy*. And it is a little observable, that after he has describ'd her Industry and Diligence for the acquiring of Wealth, this is set in the front of her disbursements as the principal use she made of it; and precedes her providing Scarlet for her household, or fine Linnen and Purple for her self, *v. 21, & 22*. The application is very obvious, and admonishes all that own the same title of Vertuous Women, to prefer the necessities of others, before their own superfluities and delicacies. Nay, if they look farther, and consider who it is that is personated in the poor, that begs in every needy distress'd suppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as done to himself, methinks they should sometimes think fit to sacrifice even their most moderate enjoyments to their charity, be asham'd to serve themselves before their Saviour, or let him stand naked and hungry, whilst they are solacing with that which would relieve him.

7. BUT

7. BUT how then shall they answer it, who suffer him to be supplanted, not by their needs but excesses; who have so devoted their hearts and purses to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to succour the wants of others? How unequal and disproportionate is it, that those who study to fling away mony upon themselves, cannot be tempted by importunity or distress, to drop an alms to the poor? What a preposterous sight it is to see a Lady, whose gay attire gives her the glittering of the Sun, yet have nothing of it's other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languishing creature, by her influence? 'Tis the counsel of the son of *Sirach*, *not to give the poor any occasion to curse thee*, *Ecclus. 4. 5.* But sure such persons do it, if the poor happen not to have more Charity than they exemplify to them. For, when they shall find such hard hearts under such soft raiment, see them bestow so much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the necessary support of theirs; 'tis a shrew'd trial of their Meekness. Poverty is apt of it's self to imbitter the spirit, and needs not such an additional temptation.

8. NAY farther, when a poor starving wretch shall look upon one of these gay creatures, and see that any one of the baubles, the loosest appendage of her dress, a fan, a busk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that
would

would warm his empty bowels; will he not have sharp incitations, not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty; but consequently to repine at the unequal distribution of Providence, and add sin to his misery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the Soul as well as to the Body. 'Tis said of *Xenocrates*, that a chas'd Bird flying to his bosom, he rescu'd it with much satisfaction, saying, He had not betray'd a suppliant: but this is in that case revers'd, and in a higher instance; for what can be more the betraying of a suppliant, than instead of supplying his wants, to rob him of his innocence, and be his snare instead of his refuge? This is a consideration I wish more deeply impress'd upon the Women of this Age: and truly 'tis their concern it should be so, for since at the last day, the inquest shall be so particular upon this very thing, 'tis but necessary they should examine how they are fitted to pass that test.

9. LET them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own breast, reflect upon the expences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richness and variety of their cloaths, nay, what the mere hypocrisies of their dress, in false hair and complexions, have cost them: to which they may also add the charge of their recreations and diversifements, those costly arts of chasing away that time, which they will one day wish to

H

recall.

recall. Let them I say compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their Charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them, be comparatively as undiscernable, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades's* Lands in the Map of the whole World; be so perfectly overwhelm'd, that it will appear little in their own sight, and nothing in God's.

10. FOR if the poor Widow's mite acquir'd a value merely from her poverty, that she had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude, how despicable the scanty oblations of the rich are in God's account. If even their liberality, who gave much, was outvy'd by a farthing, *Mark*. 12. 43. to what point of diminution must their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduc'd? especially when they shall be compar'd with the numerous and costly sacrifices they make to Pride and Luxury. Nay, I wish some were not guilty of more than the disproportion, even the total omission of Charity; that in a multitude of Taylor's bills, cannot produce the account of one Garment for the Poor, that amidst the delicacies of their own dyet, (nay, perhaps of their dogs too) never order'd so much as the crumbs of their Table to any hungry *Lazarus*. But let all such remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Tabitha's* coats, *Acts* 9. 39. will be of more value than all their richest Wardrobes, tho' they could number Gowns with

with *Lucullus's* Cloaks, which the *Roman* Story reports to be 5000. And that when their luxurious fare shall only feast the worms, and render them passive in that Epicurism they acted before; they will wish they had made the bellies of the poor their refectory, and by feeding them, nourish'd themselves to immortality.

II. LET this, I say, be seriously remember'd now, lest hereafter they fall under the same exprobrating remembrance with the rich Man in the Gospel, *Luke 16. 25. Remember that thou in thy life time receiv'dst thy good things, and Lazarus that which was evil; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* A Text which *St. Gregory* professes, was ever sounding in his ears, and made him look with suspicion and dread upon that grandeur, to which he was advanc'd, as fearing it might be design'd as his final reward. With what terrour then may those look upon their present good things, who by engrossing them wholly to themselves own them as their entire portion, and implicitly disclaim their share of the future? For to that none must pretend, who receive their transitory goods under any other notion, than that of a Steward or Factor: as we may see in the parable of the Talents, where those that had the reward of the five and ten Cities, were not such as had consum'd their Talents upon their own Riot and Excesses; but such

as had industriously employ'd them according to the design of their Lord. And if it there far'd so ill with the mere unprofitable servant, who had hoarded up his Talent, what shall become of those, who squander away theirs, and can give no account either of Use or Principal?

12. WERE these considerations duely laid to heart, we might hope to see some of the Primitive Charity revive, when Women of the highest Rank converted their Ornaments and costly Deckings, into Cloathings for the Poor, and thought no Retinue so desireable, so honourable, as a Train of Alms-folks. But I speak improperly, when I make the Poor their Attendants, for indeed they rather attended the Poor, did not only order the supply of their wants, but were themselves their Ministers, waited about their sick beds, dress'd their most loathsome ulcers, and descended to all the most servile offices about them.

13. BUT these were such heights, such transcendencies of Mercy, as requir'd a deeper foundation of Humility than will now be often met with; yet let me take the occasion to say, that it may be a good managery of a Charity, to act (as far as they can) personally in it. For besides that it prevents some abuses and frauds, which deputed Agents may sometimes be tempted to, they pay God a double tribute in it, of their persons, as well as their
For-

Fortunes. Next, they bring themselves into acquaintance with the Poor, and by that means correct those contempts and nice disdains, which their own prosperity is too apt to create. Farther yet, they excite their own Compassion, which being a motion of the sensitive part of the mind, cannot be stirr'd so effectually by any thing, as by the presence of the object; the most pathetick tragical description of a distress being not able to affect us half so much, as one ocular demonstration. Lastly, 'tis an apt means to encrease their thankfulness to Almighty God, whose bounty to themselves must needs make a deeper impression, when 'tis compar'd with the necessitous condition of others. For things are best illustrated by their contraries; and 'tis too observable in our deprav'd nature, that we value not things by their real positive worth, but comparatively as they excel others; nor ever make a right estimate of what we enjoy, 'till our own or others wants instruct us.

14. UPON all these considerations, it may be a very becoming useful circumstance in any Charitable Ministry, to be themselves the actors; and to that end 'twill be a very commendable industry, to qualify themselves to be helpful to the Poor in as many instances as they can; not only opening their Purfes, but Dispensatories too, providing Medicines for such, as either by disease, or casualty, want
that

that sort of Relief. A Charity, which I doubt not is practis'd by many, and I wish it were by more; that our nicer Dames, who study only Cosmeticks for themselves, would change the Scene, and instead of repairing or disguising their own Complexions, study the restoration of their decrepid patient's Limbs. And sure, tho' it be a less fashionable, 'tis a much better sight to see a Lady binding up a Sore, than painting her Face; and she will cast a much sweeter Savour in God's nostrils, with the smell of Unguents and Balsoms, than with the most exquisite Odours and Perfumes. For since God professes, *Isa. i. 13.* that That very *incense* which was design'd as a part of his Worship, *was an abomination to him*, because not accompany'd with the Acts of Mercy, we cannot think he will better like of those, which have no higher aim than Delicacy and Sensuality.

15. BUT besides this part of Mercy in Giving, there is another, that of Forgiving, which may happen to be of a larger Extent than the former: for whereas that was confin'd to the Poor, this has no such limits; but as it is possible to be injur'd by persons of all Ranks, so this pardoning Mercy is to reach equally with that possibility. This is that part of Charity, which we peculiarly call Clemency, a Vertue which not only Christianity, but Morality recommends. The ancient *Romans*

mans had it in such Veneration, that they number'd it, not only among Vertues but Deities, and built it a Temple. And they were somewhat towards the right in it: for it was, tho' not God, yet so eminent an Attribute of His, that nothing can more assimilate Man unto Him.

16. THERE are many Heroick acts of this kind to be met with among the vertuous Heathens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alcander*, who had struck out his eye, but entertain'd him in his house, and by his gentle Admonitions reclaim'd him from his former vitious Life. *Aristides* being after signal services, and without Crime, unjustly banished by his Citizens, was so far from acting, or imprecating against them, that at his departure from *Athens*, he solemnly pray'd the gods, that they might never by any trouble or distress be forc'd to recall him. So *Phocion* being unjustly condemn'd, left it as a solemn charge to his son *Phocas*, that he should never revenge him. A multitude of the like examples might be produc'd; but we need not borrow light from their faint Tapers, when we have the Sun-beams, I mean the Son of Righteousness, our blessed Saviour; who, as he has recommended this grace by his precept, so he has signally exemplify'd it to us in his practice; the whole design of his descent to Earth, being only to rescue his enemies from destruction.

ction. And as every part of his Life, so the last Scene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring breath was expended in mediating for his Crucifyers; *Father forgive them, Luke 23. 34.* And this copy of his was transcrib'd by his first followers, the Primitive Christians, in their severest Martyrdoms praying for their persecutors.

17. THUS we are, in the Apostles phrase, *compass'd about with a cloud of witnesses, Hebr. 12. 1.* of eminent Examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all; but, methinks, should not fail to have it on that Sex, whose native tenderness pre-disposes them to the Vertue, and who need but swim with the stream of their own inclinations. How can we think, that their melting Eyes should ever sparkle Fire, or delight in spectacles of Cruelty? That their flexible tender Hearts should turn into Steel or Adamant, be incapable of all impressions of pity? Yet, God knows, such changes have too often been seen: Women have not only put off that softness peculiar to them, but the common instinct of Humanity, and have exceeded, not only savage Men, but Beasts in cruelty. There have been too frequent instances of the implacable malice, and insatiable cruelties of Women. I need not call in the aid of Poetick fiction, and tell them of *Clytemnestra, Medea*, or the *Belides*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as instan-

ces

ces of Heroick wickedness. There are examples enough in more authentick Stories. The *Roman Tullia*, the *Persian Parysatis*; and, that we may not pass by the sacred Annals, *Jezebel* and *Athalia*. I forbear to multiply examples of this kind; of which all ages have produc'd some so eminent, as have render'd it a common observation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exasperated Woman. And it is not much to be wonder'd at, since nothing can be so ill in its pristine state, as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity, we know, so bitter, as that of alienated friends; no such persecution as that of Apostates; and proportionably, no such ferity as that of a perverted mildness. So that the Poets were not much out, who as they represented the Graces under the figures of Woman, so they did the Furies too. And since 'tis in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themselves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, sometimes at first scarce discernable; and probably the greatest monsters of cruelty would at the beginning have detested those inhumanities, which afterwards they acted with greediness.

18. IT concerns them therefore to ward off those beginnings, whose end may be so fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront, perhaps will not be so quick in dismissing that apprehension; and if it be permitted to stay,

I

twill

'twill quickly improve: twenty little circumstances shall be suborn'd to foment it with new suspicions, 'till at last it grow to a quarrel, from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge; and when that black passion has overspread the mind, like an Egyptian darkness, it admits no gleam of Reason, or Religion, but hurries the enrag'd blindfold to their own ruin often, as well as others.

19. LET none think this only a fancy or scheme of discourse: there have been too many tragical experiments of it's truth. How many men have been mortally engag'd upon no weightier original than the spleen of a Woman? The frantick notion of honour among our Duellists, fitly corresponding with the as frantick impulses of feminine revenge, and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but just imputation) to the Lady, obliging her Gallant to rush upon the most real sin and danger. A madness something beyond that which the Romances describe of Knight-Errantry: for that generally is for the relief of distress'd Damsels; but this is only to humour the two prosperous ones, the insolent and the proud. Those therefore that have observ'd the common occasions of Duels, have not unfitly divided them between Wine and Women; it being hard to say which is the most intoxicating and besotting. The son of *Sirach* couples them
them

them together, *Ecclus. 19. 2. Wine and Women will make men of understanding to fall away.* The many modern examples of this mischief, as they should strike an extreme terrour into those Women, who have been any way accessory to the death, or but danger of any Man; so are they just matter of caution to all, so to regulate their Passions, that they never come within distance of Implacability; for if once they arrive there, themselves can give no stop.

20. IN order to this, 'twill be well to consider at the first incitation, what the real ground is: perhaps sometimes they are angry, (as the Galatians were at St. Paul, *Gal. 4. 16.*) *at those that tell them the truth*; some scandalous, or at least suspicious behaviour, may have engag'd a friend to admonish them; (an office that has sometimes prov'd very fatal: those commonly that have most guilt, having least patience to hear of it.) And if this be the case, 'tis the greatest injustice in the world, to make that a quarrel, which is really an obligation: and therefore instead of maligning their Monitour, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, tho' the accusation be not with that candid design, but be meant as a reproach; yet if it be true, it should not excite anger at their accusers, but remorse, and reformation in themselves.

21. IT was the saying of a wise Man, that he profited more by his enemies than his

friends ; because they would tell him more roundly of his faults. And this is excellently improv'd by *Plutarch* in his Tract, *Of the benefits to be reap'd from Enemies* : so that even a malicious accusation may be a kindness, and consequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But suppose, in the last place, that the aspersions be not only unkind, but untrue ; it will not even then be safe to let loose to their indignation. First, in respect of Prudence, an angry vindication serving the design of the enemy, and helping to spread the calumny ; whereas a wise neglect and dissembling, do's often stifle and suppress it. Secondly, in respect of duty, for all that own themselves Christians, must confess, they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this Precept, 'twill be the more easy, the sooner they set to it. He that sees his house on fire, will not dally with the flame, much less blow or extend it, resolving to quench it at last ; and anger is as little to be trusted, which if once thoroughly kindled, will scarce expire, but with the destruction of the subject it works on.

22. LET therefore the disoblig'd not look back upon the injury, but forward to those mischiefs, which too sharp a resentment may betray them to : let them consider, that the boiling of their blood may finally cause the effu-

effusion of another's, and wrath may swell into murder. If they would do thus, and instead of those magnifying opticks, wherein they view the wrong, make use of the other end of the perspective, to discern the dismal event at a distance; it would sure fright them from any nearer approach, would keep them within those bounds which their duty prescribes them, and thereby acquaint them with a much greater, and more ingenuous pleasure than their highest revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleasure so pure and refin'd, so noble and heroick, that none but rational natures are capable of it; whereas that of Spite and Revenge (if it can be call'd a pleasure) is a mere bestial one: every, the most contemptible, animal can be angry when 'tis molested, and endeavour to return the mischief.

23. IT should therefore, methinks, be an easy determination, whether to embrace that Clemency and Compassion, which we see exemplify'd in the wisest and best of Men, nay, in the Omniscent, Immortal God; or that savage fierceness of the ignoblest creatures. This is certain, that no Woman would be content to assume the outward form of any of those: why then should they subject their noble part, the Mind, to such a transformation? For as there are no Monsters so deform'd, as those

those which are compounded of Man and Beast ; so among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious, than a Woman-Tiger. I conclude all with the advice of *Solomon, Prov. 17. 14. The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water : therefore leave off contention, before it be medled with.* When once a breach is made upon the spirit by immoderate anger, all the consequent mischiefs will flow in, like a rapid stream, when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the mounds entire, preserving that *Tendernefs and Compassion*, which God and Nature do equally enforce and recommend.





SECT. IV.

Of Affability.

I. **I**N the next place we may reckon Affability and Courtesy; which as it is amiable in all, so it is singularly so in Women of Quality, and more universally necessary in them than in the other Sex. For men have often charges and employments which do justify, nay perhaps, require somewhat of sternness and austerity; but Women ordinarily have few or no occasions of it, and those who have well digested the former Lectures of Meekness and Compassion, will not be apt to put it on unnecessarily. Now Affability may be consider'd, either as a mere human Accomplishment, or as a divine Vertue: in either notion 'tis commendable, but 'tis the latter that gives it the highest Excellence and Perfection.

2. T O

2. To begin with the first notion of it, we may make an estimate of its worth, by its Cause and by its Effects. For it's Cause, it derives it self either from a native candour and generosity of Mind, or from a noble and ingenuous Education, or sometimes jointly from both ; and these are as good Originals, as any thing merely moral can flow from. And that these are indeed its sources, common experience will attest : those of the greatest Minds and best Extractions, being usually most condescending and obliging ; whereas those of most abject Spirits and Birth, are the most insulting and imperious. *Alexander* the Great, tho' terrible in the Field, yet was of a gentle, complaisant conversation, familiarly treating those about him : yet *Crispinus*, *Narcissus*, *Nymphidius*, and other enfranchis'd bond-men, we find insolently trampling on the Roman Senatours and Consuls. 'Tis therefore a great error for Persons of Honour, to think they acquire a reverence, by putting on a supercilious gravity, looking coyly and disdainfully upon all about them : 'tis so far from that, that it gives a suspicion, that 'tis but a pageantry of greatness, some mushroom newly sprung up, that stands so stiff, and swells so much. But instead of teaching others to keep their distance, this fastidious disdain invites them to a closer inspection, that if there be any flaw, either in their life or birth, 'twill be sure to be discover'd, there being no such
pry-

prying inquisitour, as curiosity, when 'tis egg'd on by a sence of contempt.

3. ON the other side, if we consider the effects of Courtesy, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a Reputation in spite of any blemishes: a kind look or word from a Superiour, is strangely charming, and insensibly steals away Mens hearts from them. This the wise Man refers to, *Ecclus.* 18. 16. when he prefers *a word before a Gift.* And 'tis *Plutarch's* observation of *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, that when the Grecians compar'd his Affability and easiness of Access, with the fullen state and pride of other Princes; they were so enamour'd with it, that they judg'd him only worthy to be a King. And as there is no certainer, so also no cheaper way of gaining love: a friendly salutation is as easy as a frown or reproach: and that kindness may be preserv'd by them, which, if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recover'd.

4. BESIDES, when human vicissitudes are consider'd, it may be a point of Prudence too; the greatest Persons may sometimes want assistance from the meanest; nay, sometimes the face of affairs is quite chang'd, and the wheel of Fortune turns them lowest that were uppermost, and proportionably elevates the meanest. 'Tis wisdom therefore so to treat all, as to leave no impressions of unkindness, since none is so deplorable, but may possibly at one time or
K other

other have an opportunity to retaliate. 'Twas therefore a prudent, as well as an equitable resolution of that Emperour, who said, he would so entertain the addressees of his Subjects, as, if he were a Subject, he would wish the Prince should entertain him: a rule very worthy to sway all Persons of Honour in their intercourse with others. And since even among Persons in command there are degrees, and she which is Superiour to one, is Inferiour to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with what they expect. Let therefore one who meets with a cold, neglectful Treatment from any above her, examine her own resentments, and then reflect; that if she gives the like to those below her, they will doubtless have the same sense; and therefore let her resolve never to offer, what she so much dislikes to bear: and she that do's thus, that makes such inferences, will convert an injury into a benefit; civilize her self by the rudeness of others, and make that ill nurture her own discipline.

5. BUT hitherto we consider Affability only in its ethnick dress, as it is a human ornament: 'twill appear yet more enamouring upon a second view, when we look on it as bearing the impress of the Sanctuary, as a divine Vertue. And that it is capable of being so, we have the Authority of St. *Paul*, who inserts it in the number of those Christian Graces which he recommends

mends to his Roman Profelytes; *Condescend to men of low estate, Rom. 12. 16.* And that we may the better discern its value, 'tis observable, that he links it with the most eminent Vertue of Humility; for it immediatly follows his Precept of, *mind not high things.* Indeed, 'tis not only joyn'd with it as a Friend or Allie, but deriv'd from it as its stock and principle; and certainly a more divine Extraction it cannot have, Humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Vertues, that which lays the foundation, (without which the most tousing Structure will but crush it's self with it's own weight) and that which perfects and consummates the building also, secures and crowns all other Graces; which when they are most verdant and flourishing, are like *Jona's* gourd, that may afford some shadow and refreshment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will destroy them. When once they are smitten with Pride, they instantly fade and wither; so necessary is Humility both for the acquiring and conserving all that is good in us.

6. WE may therefore conclude: that Courtesy, and obligingness of behaviour, which proceeds thence, is in respect of it's spring and original, infinitely to be preferr'd before that, which descends from no higher stock than natural and prudential motives. And since 'tis natural for every production to have some similitude to that which produces it, we shall

find it no less excellent, in respect of it's properties, than it's descent. I shall instance only in two, Sincerity and Constancy.

7. FOR the first, as far as Affability partakes of Humility, it must of Sincerity also, that being a Vertue whose very elements are plainness and simplicity; for as it has no designs which want a cover, so it needs none of those subtleties and simulations, those pretences and artifices requisite to those that do. 'Tis the Precept of the Apostle, *Phil. 2. 3. In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*: where we see 'tis the nature of a lowly mind to transfer that esteem to others, which it subtracts from its self: now where such an esteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expressions and outward significations of respect, and renders the greatest condescensions, (which to an insolent humour may seem extravagant and affected) real and unfeign'd.

8. ON the contrary, that Courtesie which is deriv'd no higher than from mere human principles, is not much to be confided in. 'Tis the Psalmist's Affirmation that *all men are liars*: and therefore there is more than a possibility of deceit in their fairest shews. Sometimes we know smooth and plausible addresses have been design'd as the stale to vile and treacherous practices. The extraordinary blandishments and endearing behaviour of *Absalom* to the people, was only to *steal their hearts*, and advance his intended

intended rebellion, 2 Sam. 15. 6. and David tells us of some, *whose words are softer than butter, having war in their heart; whose words were smoother than oyl, and yet were very swords, Psal. 55. 21.* And God knows this Age has not so much improv'd in Sincerity, that we should think the same Scenes are not daily acted over among us.

9. BUT besides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower sort of this treachery, which is visible, nay so avowed, that it is one of the most common subjects of mirth and entertainment: I mean that of scoffing and derision, a thing too frequent among all; but I fear, I may say, very peculiarly among Ladies, those at least of the modish sort; their very civilities and caresses being often design'd to gain matter of scorn and laughter. Mutual visits, we know, are an expression of respect, and should flow from a real kindness; but if those now in use be sifted, how few will be found of that make? They are at the best formal, a tribute rather paid to custom than friendship, and many go to see those, for whom they are perfectly indifferent, whether they find them alive or dead, well or sick. Nay, very often they are worse than thus, design'd only to make observations, to bolt out something ridiculous, wherewith to sport themselves as soon as they are gone; and lest the inquest should return with a *non inventus*, they will accept of the slightest discoveries;
the

the least misplacing of a word, nay of a hair, shall be theme enough for a Comedy.

10. BUT if a poor Country Gentlewoman falls within their circuit, what a stock of mirth do's she afford them, how curiously do they anatomise every part of her dress, her meen, her dialect? Nay, perhaps to improve the scene, will recommend yet greater absurdities to her, under the notion of the Mode, that so she may be the more ample Subject of their scorn. Such visits as these are but insidious intrusions, the insinuations of a spy, rather than the good offices of a neighbour; and when 'tis remember'd how great a portion of some Women's time is spent in this kind of diversion, we must conclude, there have a multitude of acts gone to make up the habit. I wish they would seriously reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by a penitential sadness, and either spend their time better than in visiting, or else direct their visits to better purposes. And this they would certainly do, if they would exchange their mere popular civilities (that kind of paint and varnish in manners) for that true Christian condescension, which admits of no deceit; but is as transparent as *Drusus* wish'd his house should be; that has no secret scrues and springs, to move the eyes or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be.

11. A second property of it is Constancy; for as it is true to others, so it is to it's self;

'tis

'tis founded on the solideft of Vertues, and is not fubject to thofe light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For, ſhe that out of a diſeſteem of her proper worth, has plac'd her ſelf in a ſtate of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a juſt debt, to pay a reſpect to thoſe ſhe thinks her betters; and an humble mind will in every body find ſomething or other to prefer to her ſelf. So that ſhe acts upon a fix'd principle, and is not in danger of thoſe contradictions in her manners, which ſhall render her one day ſweet and affable, and another ſower and moroſe. But ſuch mutations are frequently incident to thoſe who are ſway'd by other motives: ſometimes an intereſt changes, and then the moſt fawning Sycophant can transplant his flatteries, and court a new Patron, yea many times to the deſpite and vilifying of the old.

12. SOMETIMES again, Fortune may change; a Man may fall from a prosperous to an adverſe ſtate, and then thoſe who were prodigal of their civilities, whiſt he needed nothing elſe, will withdraw even thoſe from him, leſt they ſhould encourage him to demand ſomething more. An experiment of this *Job* made in his friends, (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed, but quite dry when they are.

13. BUT the moſt frequent change is that of fancy and humour, which has a much more
general

general sway than reason and judgment. This is so observable in the vulgar rabble, that often in an instant they will shift passions, and hate this hour what they doted on the last. Of this all popular states have afforded many costly experiments; but we need not go farther than the sacred Story, where we find the Acclamations and *Hosannah's* of the multitude quickly converted into, *Crucify him, Crucify him*. This levity of mind has been observ'd so incident to Women, that 'tis become almost proverbial; for by how much their passions are more violent, they are commonly the less lasting: and as they are reckon'd among those colder bodies that are particularly influenc'd by the Moon, so they seem to bear a great resemblance to her in her vicissitudes and changes, yet still with a greater degree of uncertainty; for she in all her revolutions observes some constant periods, and we can tell in her wain when she will be at full; so that she has a kind of certainty, even in her planetary errors. But what Ephemerides can be fram'd for some Women's humours? who can tell how long the present will last? and what will be the next that will succeed?

14. I need not bring instances of their inconstancy from that common place of passionate widows, who have let a new love fail even through those floods of tears, where-with they bewail'd the old: for (besides that, that

that is a case wherein possibly they may find matter enough for retortion) it is here a little wide from my purpose, which designs no farther inquisition, than into their ordinary conversation, wherein that love of variety which is so remarkable in their Habit, their Dyet, their Diversions, extends it self often to their Company, their Friendships also and Converse. Those intimacies which they cherish'd lately, quickly grow despicable, and at last nauseous, and consequently their behaviour falls from kind and civil, to cold and disdainful. I doubt not but this has often been prov'd by many of those humble Companions, which officiously attend them, who cannot always fix themselves, no not by those flatteries that first introduc'd them; some new Comer perhaps has better refin'd the Art, and do's the same thing more acutely and ingeniously, and then the old one is to be turn'd off as too gross a Sycophant: or if they have been so happy as to light upon some of a more generous temper, who, instead of a servile compliance with their Humour, and high characters of their Worth, entertain them with the true images of themselves, and endeavour to make, what others only speak them; this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favour, and do's not only avert, but incense. A faithful Monitor is as unacceptable as a true Looking-glass to a deform'd Person, which at the best will be set

L

aside,

aside, and escapes well if not broken; and while great Persons dispense their Favours or their Frowns by such perverse measures as these, they will be sure to do it unjustly, as well as unconstantly.

15. I am far from making this an universal charge; I know there are Women of the highest Quality, that guide themselves by other Rules, that are deaf to all the songs of *Sirens*, and have the prudence to value a seasonable reproof, before the most extravagant Panegyrick; but this is owing to that Humility which I am now recommending, without which 'tis as impossible for greatness to be proof against flattery as it is for a Pinnacle with spreading Sails, and a violent gust of wind, to sail steddily without Ballast. And the frequent want of this is it which makes it no less frequent to see those unevennesses and inequalities in behaviour, those partialities in dispensing even the commonest Civilities, which I have now represented.

16. AND sure 'tis none of the meanest attributes due to that excellent Vertue of Humility, that it can thus fix and poise the Mind, cure those Vertigo's and giddy Humours incident to those who are mounted aloft: and above all, that it is a sure Antidote against the most insinuating poison of flattery, a holy spell or amulet against the venom of a Parasite, which the Philosopher justly calls the worst of Tame Beasts, as a Detractor is of Wild: He being in-

deed

deed a kind of Vulture, in the way of seizure, no less than Ravine, who first picks out the Eyes of that which he designs to prey upon; suffering not the person concern'd to see any thing of that destruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the ominous Birds, no Night-Raven, or Screech-Owl, can bode half so dismally as these Domestick Birds of prey, which are not only presages, but instruments of Ruin wheresoever they haunt.

17. 'Tis therefore the universal concern of those that are great and prosperous, to chase them away, as *Abraham* did the Fowls from his Sacrifice, *Gen. 15. 11.* but yet more peculiarly so of those to whom fortune has given a sudden rise, and unexpected grandeur, they being of all others the most obnoxious to this sort of Harpyes. The surprizes of prosperity do no less disturb the judgment, than those of adversity: and as one who is in an instant snatch'd up to some high Tower, is so amaz'd to see himself there, that he has no just measure of the Altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him than it is; so they that ascend to greatness by swift and rapid motions, have their heads so turn'd, that they are apt to overvalue it; and to look with contempt on those whom before, perhaps, they thought worth their envy. And on a mind thus prepar'd, flattery may make any impression, it suborning even Providence, as a witness on its side, and inferring

L 2

from

from the Dignities obtain'd, the transcending merit of the obtainer. A piece of Sophistry which the slightest observer may easily confute, all Ages giving instances of those, whose Vices have preferr'd them, and by a strange Chymistry have extracted Honour out of infamous Acts. Yet to a mind possess'd with it's own admiration, this shall pass for a demonstration. So treacherous a thing is Pride, that it combines with all who design to cheat us: and indeed 'tis not only an accessory, but the principal: none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not first seduc'd by their own.

18. IT will therefore be a point of Wisdom for all Persons of Honour, to encrease their Caution with their Fortune, and as they multiply their Retinues without, so especially to enforce their Guard within, that they become not slaves to their own Greatness, fix not themselves in such a posture of State, as to become immoveable to all the offices of Humanity and Civility, nor think that their admission to Greatness, is upon the same terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their Profelytes, that they must renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others, than as a Counter set in the place of thousands or hundreds, do's from one set in the place of tens or unites. A little transposition may quite alter the case; or however, when they are all taken off the score, they

they are then indiscriminately tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place or value. So undiscernable will be the difference between the greatest Queen and the meanest Servant, when Death, that great Leveller, shall have mixt them; there will be no inquisition in the Grave, who came Embalm'd or Perfum'd thither; and, as a Learned Man says, the Ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good dust as the Paint of *Jezebel*.

19. BUT I shall be thought to have outrun my Subject, and instead of that amiable Image of Affability, and universal obligingness, the great Ornament of Life, to introduce the grim Figure of Death, that sullen Executioner, whom no Gift, no Prayers can mollify. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for as it's final stroke cures all the infirmities of the Body, so the foresight and contemplation of it, is as much a Catholicon for all the maladies of the Mind; especially that of insolence and disdain. For sure they cannot much pride themselves in any Exaltation, that remember they must finally fall into the dust: nor arrogantly despise others, who consider that themselves shall one day be insulted over by Worms and Insects. Such mental descents into the Vault or Charnel-house, are the best disciplines for the demeanour in other places, according to the Admonition of the Wise Man, *Remember thy end, and thou shalt never do amiss.*

SECT,



SECT. V.

Of Piety.

- I. **LASTLY**, To Compleat and Crown all other Excellencies, nothing is so proper, so necessary, as Piety and Devotion. This is the Salt which seasons all Sacrifices; yea the Altar which sanctifies the Gift; no good (how splendid soever in the sight of Man) being acceptable to God, 'till it be thus consecrated, and has this seal of the Sanctuary upon it. This is a Vertue truly Divine, as well in it's original as it's end; for as it comes from Heaven, (is an afflation of the blessed Spirit) so it tends thither also, and thither raises it's Votaries. This is it which sublimates and spiritualizes Humanity,

Humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of Mortality, and so wings our earthly lumpish Nature, that we can soar aloft to the Region of Spirits, and by it's Raptures, make some Essay of that state of Separation, even while we are link'd to the Body. This is it which combines us so with God, that we have the same interest, the same choices; nay, it do's in a sort Communicate and Enterchange proprieties with Him; the All-powerful God seems impotent and unable to resist it's influence, whilst it invests us feeble Wretches in a kind of Omnipotency, by engaging Him for us who can do all things.

2. Now this Piety may be consider'd either in a larger, or more limited sense: in the former 'tis as wide as the whole scheme of Duty, not confin'd to any one Act, but extended to all the Commands of God. For, as the animal Spirit diffuses it's self into all the most distant members of the Body: so this more vital Principle has as universal an influence on the Mind; stamps that with such an admiration and reverence of God, such a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at least habitually) design'd to obey and glorify him.

3. IN the more limited sense, Piety is taken for our more immediate intercourse with God, in things purely Divine, as Adorations, Prayers, Aspirations, and all pantings and breathings of the Soul after Him; and in this notion
tis

'tis more particularly call'd Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay indeed, as an effect in it's cause; for where Piety has not first form'd and modell'd the Soul, there can be no true Devotion. External forms of it there may be, but these are but Ceremony and Pageantry; the most submissive Prostrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before the Ark, the fall of a lifeless Trunk; the most elevated Eyes but a kind of convulsive motion; and the most rigid Mortifications but like the Cuttings and Launcings of *Baal's* Priests. Of this the very Heathen had some notion, and therefore in their Worships, had many preparatory Ceremonies of Lustration and Purifying, as being conscious of the incongruity, that unholy Persons should be admitted to Sacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has Excellently (I had almost said Evangelically) defin'd, *the best way of worshipping God*, to be *the doing what he commands*. Indeed, without this, our Devotion is mere stratagem and design; we invoke God as we use to cajole Men, only to serve a present turn; and of such disingenuous Addresses, 'tis easy to read the event, or if we cannot, *Solomon* will instruct us, *Proverb. 15. 8. The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. To treat of the several branches of Piety in the first notion, is not agreeable to the intended brevity of this Treatise; nor necessary,

ry, because there are so many distinct Tracts extant on that Subject; yet I shall, the more closely to adapt it to my Female Readers, observe the propriety of it to Women, not only as it is their greatest Ornament and Advantage; but especially as they have somewhat more of pre-disposition towards it in their native Temper. God's Laws which are the rule of Piety have this common with Mens, that they are inforc'd upon us by the proposals both of punishments and rewards, by that means engaging two of our most sensible passions, Fear and Love; and the female Sex being eminent for the pungency of both these, they are consequently the better prepar'd for the impressions of Religion.

5. THIS is so much acknowledg'd, that our Masculine Atheists make an ill use of it, and are willing to think that Religion owes it's force only to the impotence of the subject, on which it works; that 'tis only an imposition upon the easy credulity of Women, and are content to allow them the inclosure of it; wherein, tho' they sufficiently shew their contempt of Piety, yet they unawares give a greater honour to that Sex than they intend, whilst they confess it more capable of an assimilation to the supreme Goodness, and of the renewal of God's Image (for to that all Piety is design'd) than their own. And therefore Women have so little reason to be asham'd, that they ought

M

to

to glory in the concession, and gratefully to celebrate the goodness of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkness, so converts their natural infirmities into a means of Spiritual strength; makes the impotencies and defects of their Nature subservient to the operations of Grace; and by consecrating their very passions, makes even those *Gibeonites* serviceable to the Tabernacle. But then 'tis to be remember'd, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this design of God's, to let their passions run in the channel he has cut for them; so to confine their Fear and Love to Spiritual Objects, that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing else; but in all their estimations of things dreadful or desirable, to give still the just deference to that which is Eternal.

6. AND, as Women in general have this advantage towards Piety, and obligation to it, so particularly those of Quality, whom we may suppose to have generally a more early institution and instruction in it, than those of a meaner rank: and besides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledge of their duty and (by the help of an ingenuous Education) clearer apprehensions to discern it; and when they do so, have greater obligations to perform it, both in respect of God, of others, and themselves.

7. IN respect of God they have the greatest tye of gratitude, not only for the common mercies

mercies which they partake with the rest of Mankind; but for those peculiar, by which they are differenc'd from others; of which, if they want a just value, let them ask themselves how willing they would be to part with them; how she that has fed delicately, would like to be desolate in the street, or *she that has been brought up in Scarlet, to embrace the dunghill, Lament. 4. 5.* and according to the aversion they find to such a change, let them estimate their present enjoyment, and the thankfulness it exacts.

8. SECONDLY, in regard of others, their Piety back'd with their secular advantages, may be of more extensive benefit; they have many opportunities of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way else, yet the splendour of their example will, by the eminency of their conditions, shine (as a light on some high Tower) more perspicuously, and guide many into the same path of Virtue. And certainly 'tis no small obligation that lyes on them in this respect; for God, who do's nothing without an end worthy of his Wisdom, can never be thought to have selected some persons as the objects of his bounty, merely that they may swell and glut themselves with sensual pleasures. No, doubtless, he who is the great Master of the Universe, disposes all things for common benefit, and therefore, if he has plac'd some in an higher Orb than others, it is that they may have an auspicious influence

on those below them ; and if they fail in this, they are no longer Stars but Comets, things of ominous and unlucky bode to all about them. I might enlarge on this subject ; but having done it already in the Gentleman's Calling, I suppose it unnecessary, since that part is equally adapted to both Sexes.

9. IN the last place, they have all obligations to Piety, in respect of themselves, and that, in two considerations : the first, of their present danger ; the second, of their final account. For their danger, 'tis evident they do not more out-number their inferiours in any thing than in the opportunities, nay, solicitations to sin. Wealth and Honour have many snares, and, which is worse, do often dispose the mind to such a heedless security, that it takes no care to avoid them : and as in the body, the diseases of repletion are far more numerous than those of emptiness, so the mind is oftner vitiated by affluence and prosperity, than by indigency and adversity. It becomes therefore those who are so surrounded with enemies to fortify themselves : and that they can no way do, but by a sincere Piety, that *whole armour of God*, which the Apostle describes, *Ephes. 6. 13. by which alone they may repell all the darts of temptations* ; nay, not only ward the blow, but wrest the weapon out of Satan's hand, so that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their
wealth

wealth and greatness give them to be bad, they may retort this argument, and by a wholesome inference, collect thence their great obligation to be good; and that not only upon the score of gratitude, (tho' that were enough to an ingenuous soul) but, in the second place, of interest also, in respect of that account they must finally give. For tho' God be not an unjust exactor, to reap where he has not sown, yet he is not so negligently profuse, as to do that which no prudent man will do, scatter his goods promiscuously, without taking notice where they fall; but as he dispenses all things by a particular Providence, so he do's it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account, how that end has been comply'd withall.

10. IT is a smart exprobration of God's to *Israel*, *Ezek.* 16, 17, 18, 19. that she had sacrilegiously employ'd his *silver and gold, his oyl, his flour and honey, which he had given her, in the service of her Idols*; by which, as we may see, he takes notice how we dispose of our Temporal Possessions, so it shews us how the indictment will proceed against all those who so pervert their use. With what confusion must they appear at the great Audit, who can give no other account of their receipts, but that they consum'd them upon their lusts, wag'd war against God with his own treasure, and been as well thieves as rebels? What a
Luciferian

Luciferian fall will they have from their honours, who have endeavour'd to undermine God's; thought themselves too great to pay him homage, and by their prophane and vicious example, induc'd a contempt of him? In short, what a retaliation of inversions will there then be? Those that have turn'd God's Grace into wantonness, converted his bounty into the fuel of their Pride and Luxury, shall then have their glory turn'd into shame, their riots and excesses into the want of a drop of water, and shall retain nothing of their greatness but the guilt; the grating remembrance of having abus'd those Temporal Blessings, by which, if well manag'd, they might have been receiv'd into Everlasting Habitations. How necessary then is it for all who have receiv'd so much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges the great owner has impos'd upon so ample an income; what God requires of them for whom he hath done so much; and this is particularly the business of Piety, which in all the fore-mention'd respects, is, as the usefullest, so the noblest accomplishment of greatness.

II. AND such it hath been accounted 'till this profane Age of ours, which has remov'd all the boundaries of the former, revers'd even the instincts of nature, and will not leave us so much of Religion, as the very worst of Heathens had. For how erroneous soever they were

were in the choice of their Deities, they always honour'd and reverenc'd those they chose, committed most of their enormities in obedience, not in affront to them; did not assign them votaries, as *Jeroboam* did his Priests, of the meanest of the people; but thought themselves dignify'd by their service, and esteem'd it an infamy not to be pious. But alas! we now-adays make other estimates; Religion is so abject, so contemptible a thing as is thought fit to influence none that are great, either in parts or quality: and therefore tho' too many are willing to appropriate it to Women, upon the first account, *as the Gospel is the foolishness of preaching*, 1 Cor. i. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the latter, and are not willing to afford it any of the nobler Profelytes even of that Sex.

12. I doubt not, there are many Lectures read to such, to fortify them against all impressions of Piety, to raze out the common notions of a God, and in order to that, to depose his Vice-gerent within them, discard their Conscience, that unmannerly inmate, which is still speaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt sometimes to question their grand principle, and tell them they have Souls. And truly 'tis no wonder if the abettors of Atheism take this course; for since they have no solid foundation of truth or reason, 'tis but necessary they support their Party by Authority;

Authority; the countenance and applause of great Persons: and God knows they have too much succeeded in their design. But in the mean time, what security do they give for the truth of their pretensions? We know 'tis still requir'd of those that will practise upon other people's concerns, that they put in caution to secure the owner from damage. But alas! what gage can they give for a Soul? who can contrive a form of Indemnity, where that is the thing hazarded?

13. 'Tis easy indeed for one of these Apostles of *Satan*, to tell a Lady that she has nothing to do, but to indulge to her pleasure; that 'tis the extremest folly to be frighted from a present enjoyment, by a fear of I know not what future smart; that God, and Sin, and Hell, are but names, certain Momo's and Bug-bears conjur'd up by Divines, to work upon her fear, and abuse her credulity. This and much more of this kind may be said, and I doubt often is; but all this while the question is begg'd, and a strong affirmation must pass for proof: for I defy all the Doctors of Atheism, to make any demonstration of their Tenet; and yet, tho' they pretend to no demonstration themselves, Religion must be condemn'd merely for the want of it: that is, for not making Spiritual things lyable to sense, for distinguishing between Belief and Science; which is indeed for doing the most
reason-

reasonable thing in the world, *viz.* the remitting every object to the tryal of its proper faculty, and they who suspect it upon that account, may by the same kind of Logick, wrangle us out of all our senses, may persuade us we hear nothing, because the eye discerns not sounds; that we taste not, because the ear understands not gusts and savours, and so on to the rest.

14. AND yet this is the bottom of those arguments, which the great pretenders to Reason make against Religion; and in the mean time have so little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light credulity of Fools and Women, that embrace the dictates of Faith, whilst at the same instant they exact a more implicit assent to their negative Articles, their No-Religion. A strange magisterial confidence so to impose on this Age what is so universally contradictory to all former, and to the common verdict of Mankind. For, 'tis observable through all the successions of Men, that there was never any society, and collective body of Atheists. A single one might perhaps be here and there found, (as we see sometimes Monsters and Mishapen Births) but for the generality, they had always such instincts of a Deity, that they never thought they ran far enough from Atheism; but rather chose to multiply their gods, to have too many than none at all: nay, were apt to descend to the Adoration of things below

N

them-

themselves, rather than to renounce the power above them. By which we may see, that the notion of a God is the most indelible Character of natural Reason; and therefore whatever pretence our Atheists make to Ratiocination and deep Discourse, it is none of that Primitive fundamental Reason coetaneous with our Humanity; but is indeed a reason fit only for those, who own themselves like the beasts that perish.

15. BUT admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their Opinion an equal probability with our Faith, yet even this could never justify any body in point of Prudence, that should adhere to them. Common discretion teaches us, that where two propositions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, 'till we have examin'd the consequences, and find something in the one, which may overpoise and out-weigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practise, there are no motives so considerable, either to invite or avert, as Advantage and Danger.

16. LET us apply this to our present Case, and examine the pretensions of the Atheist and the Christian in both respects. But first, we are to remember, that both Advantage and Danger are to be view'd under a double notion, either as present or as future. The former is the Atheist's most proper Subject, and indeed,
all

all that he can pertinently speak to, who professes himself only a Man of this World. Here he will tell us, that the disbelief of God and another life, is the great Enfranchiser of Mankind, sets us at liberty from that Thralldom, those Bonds, wherewith our superstitious fears had fetter'd us; that it supersedes all those nice and perplexing enquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquisitions only to this one, how we shall most please our selves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat; but is only to put an edge upon his palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be fill'd with the most delicious Liquor. The wanton need not pull out his Eye; but only contrive to possess what that tempts him to desire; and in a word, none of our appetites need be restrain'd, but satisfy'd. And this uncontrol'd licentiousness, this brutish liberty, is that *summum bonum*, that supreme happiness which they propose to themselves, and to which they invite others.

17. ON the other side, the Christian is not without his claim to a present advantage, tho' of a far differing nature: he is not so preposterous, as to think it a preferment to sink below his kind; to aspire to an assimilation with mere animals, which is the utmost the former amounts to; but he proposes to himself the satisfaction of a Man; those delights which may entertain his Reason, not his Sense, which con-

sist in the Rectitude of a well-inform'd Mind. His Religion is the perfectest Scheme of Morality, and makes him a Philosopher without the help of the Schools: it teaches him the art of subduing his Appetites, calming his Passions, and in a word, makes him Lord of himself; and by that, gives him all the pleasures which result from such a Sovereignty. Nor is he totally void even of the pleasures of sense, which in many instances are greater to him, than to those that most court him. Temperance Cooks his courtest dyet to a greater gust, than all their study'd mixtures; Chastity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him, than all the nauseating variety of their unbounded lusts; and Contentment swells his Mite into a Talent, makes him Richer than the *Indies* would do, if he desir'd beyond them. Nor is it a contemptible benefit, that his moderation gives him an immunity from those sensitive pains which oft bring up the Rear of inordinate sensual pleasures. So that his condition, even set in the worst Light, in that very particular wherein the Atheist most triumphs over him, is not so deplorable as 'tis represented.

18. BUT if it were, he has pleasures that would infinitely over-whelm that smart, and that not only in his Reason, (as hath been said before) but in his more sublime Diviner part, such irradiations from above, such ante-pasts of his future Bliss, such acquiescence in a

calm

clam and serene Conscience, as is very cheaply bought with all he can suffer here. I know the prophane laugh at these things as Chime-ra's and the Illusions of a prepossess'd Fancy: (and truly if they were so, they might yet come in balance with many of their pleasures, which are as much owing to opinion and imagination:) but if we consider what supports they have given under the heaviest pressures, how they enabled the primitive Martyrs, not only to suffer, but even to court all that is formidable to Human nature, we cannot think that a mere phantastick imaginary joy, could deceive the sense of such real, such acute Torments. And tho' in this great declination of Zeal, there be perhaps few that can pretend to those higher degrees of Spiritual Raptures, yet certainly were the votes of all devout persons collected, they would all concur in this Testimony, that even in the common offices of Piety, the ordinary discharge of a good Conscience, there is an infinitely greater complacency, a higher gust and relish than in all the pleasures of Sense. But of this the most irrefragable witnesses are those, who from great voluptuaries have turn'd devotees; and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two states is the most pleasant. I wish those who will not believe this on other's words, would themselves make the tryal, and till they do so, they are notoriously unjust to pronounce
that

that a Fiction, of whose Reality they refuse to make proof.

19, BY what hath been said, some estimate may be made which bids fairest (the Atheist or Christian) as to present Temporal felicity: but alas! what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to say 'tis Temporal? yet we may give it a term below that, and say, 'tis Momentary. For since our life is so, nothing that depends on that, can be otherwise, and yet in this shallow bottom the Irreligious embark their All. For, as to all future advantage, 'tis their Principle to disclaim it, they discern *no reward for blameless Souls, Wisd. 2. 22.* So that in this particular the Christian do's not compare with, but Triumph over them. *He knows that if his earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolv'd, he hath a building of God; an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2 Cor. 5. 1.* That when he parts with his Life, he do's not resign his Happiness, but shall receive it infinitely improv'd both in degree and duration. And now certainly it's visible enough, which opinion proposes the fairer hopes, and consequently which (supposing but an equal probability of truth) is the most inviting.

20. BUT some Spirits there are so ignoble, that the most glorious Prize cannot animate them; that like a Swine, the Muscles of whose Eyes, they say, permit him not to look
upward,

upward, are not concern'd in all the felicities above, but would at a venture resign their share in those, so they may securely enjoy their husk and draff. But yet even those who are incapable of the more generous resentments, may be apt enough to the more servile; and danger may fright, tho' glory cannot allure them. It concerns such therefore to compare the Mischiefs which each Opinion threatens to their opposites, and from thence make an estimate which is safest to be chosen. And here let the Atheist himself cast up the account of the dangers consequent to Christianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation (or rather moderation) of some present sensual pleasures, or the incurring of some present sensitive pains; the former in the daily exercise of Temperance and Mortification; the latter, (more rarely and oftner in purpose than act) the suffering for Righteousness sake. And both these the Christian balances, nay, out-weighs, by two more important present hazards on the other side. To the former, he opposes the danger of being enslav'd to the Brutish part of a Man's self, a thing so deplorable even in the judgement of Humanity, that all writers of Ethicks have uniformly declar'd no servility to be so sordid and intolerable, as that of the vicious Man to his Passions and Lusts. To the latter, he confronts the mischief of being a Slave to every
Man

Man else, for such he certainly is, whom the fear of suffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks just and honest. For if all the Men in the World could successively have the power to afflict him, they would also have to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the dignity of Human nature, than to have a Spirit always prepar'd for such a servitude? Besides, even the utmost sufferings which Christianity can at any time require, is out-vy'd daily by the effects of Luxury and Rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a Martyr for his God, thousands become so to their vices.

21. IF from the present we look forward to future dangers, the Atheist must here be perfectly silent; he cannot say that the Christian after this Life, shall be in any worse estate than himself, since he concludes they shall both be the same nothing; but the Christian threatens him with a more dismal state. He allows him indeed a being, yea an Eternal one; but it is only such as qualifies him for a Misery as Eternal; the worm that never dyes the Fire unquenchable, where all the excesses of his short Pleasures shall be reveng'd with more excessive, endless Torments: his Senses which were here the only Organs of his Felicity, shall then be (tho' not the only) the very sensible mediums of his Wretchedness; and that Conscience which he here suspended from

it's

it's Office, shall then take out it's Arrears, and return all it's stifled Admonitions in perpetual Horrors, and desperate upbraiding. I need not now sure ask on which side the greater danger lyes.

22. To conclude, the result of all is, that the transitory Pleasures of the Atheist are overpois'd, even by the present satisfactions of the Pious. And the Eternity of unbounded, unconceivable joys he expects hereafter, comes in *ex abundanti*, having nothing on the other side that offers at a competition with it. And at the very same rate of proportion, we have seen the dangers also are such, that we can easily compute the utmost mischief our Christianity can do us, if it should be false; but the damage of the other is inestimable, both for the penalty of Loss and Sense. I may now appeal to common prudence, to judge of the vast inequality, and to pronounce, that sure there had need be some great evidence of truth on the Atheist's side, to preponderate all these disadvantages. Indeed, nothing much below a demonstration can justify the choice of so dangerous Principles: I am sure an equal probability can never do it, where the danger is so unequal; and were the veriest Atheist consulted in a secular case of the like circumstances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that should make such an election. How desperate a phrensy then is it to do it,
O without

without so much as that equal probability; nay indeed, without any probability at all? And yet this madness sets up for the monopoly, not of Wit only, but Reason too; and by confidence and clamour seeks to run down those Arguments it can never confute.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digression from my proper Subject, but I cannot confess it so, for since my present business is to recommend Piety, I can no way do that so effectually as by shewing it's consonancy to right reason, especially considering the busy industry now us'd to represent it under another form, and to alienate from it those persons, whose greatness may give it any lustre or repute in the World; of which sort I suppose there are few more frequently attack'd than Women of Quality, that converse among those who call themselves the *Wits* of the *Age*; who living in so infectious an air, had need of some antidotes about them; and if what I have now offer'd, appear not forcible enough (for it pretends to the tithe of what may be said on the Subject) yet it may at least do them this service, to put them in mind of what they need, and send them to the fuller dispensatories of others.

24. AND that is the thing I should earnestly beg of them, that they would be so just to their own interest, as not to combine with seducers against themselves; but if they have
been

been so unhappy as to lend one ear unto them, yet at least not to give up both to be forc'd into a slavish submission to their dictates, but hear what may be said on the other side. And sure 'tis but a low composition for God thus to divide with *Satan*; yet 'tis that of which his *Emissaries* are so jealous, that 'tis one of their grand Maxims, that none who professes Divinity, is to be advis'd withall; and therefore by all Arts they are to be render'd, either ridiculous or suspected; to which, methinks, may be apply'd that Fable (which *Demosthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their Oratours) of the Wolves and the Sheep, who coming to a Treaty, the first Article of the Wolves was, that the Sheep should give up their mastives, which guarded them: the resemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

25. BUT this is manifestly to reverse all former Rules, and to trust a Man rather in any Faculty than his own, and would never have prevail'd in any thing, but where the Soul is concern'd, that poor despicable thing, whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. 'Tis sure, that if any should dispute their title to an earthly possession, they would not so tamely resign it, nor would trust their own selves in it's defence, but would consult their ablest Lawyers, and by them, sift out every circumstance that might establish their claim.

Why should they then suffer themselves to be talk'd out of an Heavenly Inheritance, without so much as once proposing their doubts to those, whose study and profession it is to resolve them? But, as in all other ills, so in this, prevention is better than cure; and therefore to those that are yet untainted, the securest course will be to stop both ears against all prophane insinuation; and to use those who tempt them to be disloyal to their God, that spiritual adultery, as they should do those who solícite them to the carnal, not so much as to enter parly, but with the greatest indignation detest and reject them. 'Tis the saying of the Wise Man, *Prov. 25. 23.* that *an angry countenance driveth away a back biting tongue.* And certainly would great Persons look severely on such defamers of Religion, they would give some check to that impudence of prophaneness, which has given it such a vogue in the World.

26. AND sure this is much their duty to do, if they own any relation to that God who is so dishonour'd. They would think it a very disingenuous thing to sit by to hear a Friend or Benefactor revild, and express no displeasure; and is God so friendless among them, that only his traducers and blasphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any blasphemy, they rent their cloaths; but I fear we have some

of

of our nice Dames that would be much more concern'd at a rip in their garment, than at the rending and violating God's sacred Name; and could more patiently behold the total subversion of Religion, than the disorder or misplacing of a lock or ribband. But 'tis to be hop'd there are not many so impious; and those that are not, will surely think themselves oblig'd with all their power to discountenance all the Fautors of Irreligion, whether they be the solemn sedater sort, that would argue, or the jollyer, that would rally them out of their Faith.

27. BUT when they have thus provided against the assaults of others, and secur'd the speculative part of Religion, they have only establish'd a Judicatory against themselves, stor'd up matter of Conviction and Accusation, if they answer it not in the practick. I must therefore after this long excursion, return to my first point, and beseech them seriously to weigh the obligations they have to Piety in the general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a Christian life; of which as I intend not to speak particularly, so I know not where to find a better summary, than that which St. James has drawn up, Chap. 1. v. 27. *Pure Religion and undefil'd before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

28. BUT

28. BUT besides this general, there is (as I said before) another more restrain'd notion of Piety, as it relates to our more immediate intercourse with God, in divine Ordinances and Worship; in which respect it commonly passes under the name of Devotion, and thus consider'd it has a greater propriety to the Female Sex. For Devotion is a tender Plant, that will scarce root in stiff or rocky ground, but requires a supple gentle soil; and therefore the feminine softness and plyableness is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have been very eminent growths of it in that Sex. I need not heap up examples of former Ages, but rather perswade this to leave some at least to the following, and the more considerable the persons are, the more conspicuous will be the example, which seems the more to adapt it to those I now speak to. Devotion in a Cloister is as recluse as the Votary, a light rather under a bushel than on a candlestick; and in an obscure Cottage 'tis either not observ'd, or else thought to be but the effect of destitution and secular wants, a reserve rather than a choice: but when those who are in the eye of the world, and most eminent actors on the Theater of human life, shall choose the part of a Saint, when those who want none of the divertisements or blandishments of Earth, shall have their conversation in Heaven, this recommends it to the spectators,

spectators, as the true and greatest object of human choice; since 'tis chosen by those who know the utmost pretence of all it's competitors.

29. **NOR** is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of it's effects; but 'tis also more necessary in respect of their obligation. Devotion is an abstraction from the World, and therefore cannot in any eminent degrees be practis'd by those whose necessities or business do much entangle them in it. So that from such, a far less proportion will be accepted, than from those, whose plenty and ease give them no other want but that of employment. And certainly if there be any, of whom that can truly be said, Women of Quality are the persons; for they in this respect exceed even Men of the like rank; for the Men are often engag'd in publick employments, and must lend most of their time to the use of others; or however, all have the care of their own private affairs, the managery of their fortunes to employ them. But of Women, the utmost that is ordinarily requir'd, is but a little easy inspection within their own walls, the oversight of a few children and servants, and even from this, how many are by their condition of life exempted? And how many more do by their niceness and delicacy exempt themselves? And surely so perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor safe. And therefore God,
who

who projects we should be both, never design'd it for any of mankind: but where he gives so much liberty from secular, he expects a greater diligence in spiritual employments.

30. AND indeed, 'tis an amazing thing to see, that any into whom he has breath'd the breath of Life, on whom he hath stamp'd the Image of his own Eternity, can think those Immortal Souls were given them only to serve the mean and abject uses of their corruptible Bodies, (for which the Soul of the dullest Animal would have done as well) that eating and drinking, sleep and recreations, which are only useful to the supporting us in this World, are the only things for which we were sent hither. And yet if we may measure their opinions by their practice, this seems to be the persuasion of many of our female Gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of attainture of their blood, to do any thing but please their senses. An error sure of the most pernicious consequence imaginable. We know a Lady of pleasure is in one sense a very scandalous Epithet, and truly 'tis no very laudable one in the other; nay, which is worse, they are often co-incident, and fall in with each other. She whose sole universal aim is pleasure, will not think her self much out of her road, in the pursuit of any particular. And she that thinks she lives for no other purpose, will so often be at a loss for innocent pleasure, that she is almost

under

under a necessity to call in the nocent, to serve the very end (as she supposes) of her being. But indeed were they sure to confine themselves to such as are harmless in their kind, yet the excess of them renders them sinful, and the doting pursuit denominates them *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*, a character so black, that the Apostle compleats his Catalogue of the worst vices of the worst of times with it, *1 Tim. 3. 4.*

31. IT is therefore the great goodness of God to design a rescue for those whose condition exposes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their Devotion, divert them from lavishing both it and their Souls together. Neither do's he by this defeat their aim of a pleasant Life, but rather assist it: for whereas sensual delights are vagrant, and must be chas'd through a hundred turnings and wild mazes; the Spiritual are fix'd, and one may always know where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which pleasure to choose? like a surfeited stomach, the greater variety is set before it, the more it nauseates all. What difficulties hath a Lady many times to resolve, whether an after-noon shall be spent at Court, or at the Theater? whether in Dancing, or at Cards, in giving or receiving Visits, as not knowing which will best please her? But she that knows the delights of Devotion, knows withall, that there is no other fit

P

to

to come in competition with it; and so is not distracted in her choice, nor needs go farther than her Closet for the most agreeable entertainment. I know this will sound a little incredible to those that know no other use of Closets, than as a Conservatory of Gauds and Baubles: that aspire to no pleasure there above that of Children, the playing with Pictures and Puppets that adorn it. Nor indeed do I pretend, that such shall find those satisfactions I speak of. Those, whose errand is to *Beelzebub* the God of Flies, must not expect to be treated by the God of *Israel*. An ingenuous Man will scorn to obtrude himself on those who desire not his company, and sure God will not make himself more cheap. Those that will meet him in their Closets, must come with that design, resort thither as to an Oratory; nay, more than so, they must come frequently. Spiritual joys know not the way to a place where they are not often invited; and as Men seek not for each other in places where they seldom or never come, but where they daily frequent; so God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we appear rarely and accidentally, but where we usually resort.

32. I shall not need to branch out Devotion into the several parts, that being done already in a multitude of other Treatises, of which if they please to consult any one, they cannot

cannot want a Directory for their Worship, whether private or publick. Only let me observe the order and connexion of those two, that they are neither to be sever'd, nor yet to be rang'd preposterously. The private must not juggle out the publick, for God expects his solemn homage; and their hudling it up in private, as it may give Men ground to suspect they pay none at all, so neither God nor Man can collect any thing better from it, than that they are ashamed of the Deity they pretend to serve. On the other side, the publick must as little swallow up the private, and where it do's, there may be a just doubt of it's sincerity. Many attractives there may be to Church, besides that of Piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches so much reverence to that awful presence they are to approach, as not to come without some preparation. What sollicitude, what critical niceness will a Lady have for her dress, when she is to appear at a solemn meeting at Court? and shall she take no care how fordidly, how undecently she appears when the King of Kings gives audience? Shall many Hours, Days, nay, perhaps Weeks, be taken up in contriving for the one, and shall there never be a minute allotted for the other? This sure were very unequal, and yet this is the case where the devotion of the Closet do's not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not first tun'd

there, it will be very ill qualify'd for that harmony of Souls, which is the only thing God regards in our Publick Offices. So that were there no other use of private Devotion, but as it relates to the publick, that were enough to speak the necessity of it.

33. BUT indeed 'tis not only a needful preparative to that Sacred commerce, but to our civil. The World is but a larger sort of Pest-house; in every corner of it we meet with infectious airs, and those that converse in it had need of this Antidote. How many temptations do's every place, every hour, every interview present to the shocking even of that moral integrity, which a sober Heathen would judge fit to preserve, much more of that strict Piety our Christianity exacts?

34. 'T WAS the observation that *Origen* made of himself, that the day in which he so shamefully fell by sacrificing to Idols, he had ventur'd out in the morning before he had compleated his usual Prayers; the Devil finding him so unarm'd took advantage to assault him, as knowing he had then but a single impotent Man to wrestle with, who had forfeited, by not invoking, the protection of God. And indeed, since prayer is the most powerfull exorcism to eject Him; we may well conclude, the omission of it is a likely means to invite Him: for if God have not the prepossession, if we do not by hearty Prayer
surrender

surrender our Souls to Him in the Morning, they are then all the Day after, like that empty House mention'd in the Gospel; a fit Receptacle for as many evil Spirits as please to inhabit there. Nor are these Spiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are lyable to a multitude of Secular ones also: our Persons, our Fortunes, our Reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of Accidents are there to which we lye open, and nothing to guard us from them but the Divine Providence? which if we neglect to solícite, we are sure very unworthy of it's defence. And this is a consideration that, methinks, should bring even the most sensual Persons upon their knees: for though too many may be found to despise the former danger, and can contentedly enough expose their Souls, yet such are usually the most tender of their Temporal concerns, it being commonly the excessive love of those which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the falling into sin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and tho' she cares not for the spotting of her Innocence, would be very loth any accident should blemish her Face, disparage her Fame, or impoverish her Fortune, and yet from any or all of these, she is utterly unable to guard her self. So that if Piety will not, yet interest, methinks, should render her an homager to
that

that Omnipotent Power, from whence alone she can derive her safety.

35. AND now, methinks, a Duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a Man, with Human as well as Divine perswasives, should not easily be shaken off. I wish I could say it never is, but I fear there are some of those I now speak to, who neglect it in spite of all these inducements; who, tho' they can pretend nothing serious enough to own the name of business, do yet suffer a succession of I know not what impertinencies, to divert them. And indeed, were the expence of some Lady's days calculated, we should find every hour so full of emptiness, so over-laden with vanities, that 'tis scarce imaginable, where an office of Devotion should croud in.

36. THE morning is divided between sleep and dressing; nor would the morning suffice, but that they are fain to make a new computation to measure it, not by the Sun, but by their time of dining, which is often as late as the stationary hours of the Primitive Fasts, tho' upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduc'd, are too short for those many divertisements that await them, and must therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the mere fatigue of pleasures sends a Lady to her rest, 'tis not imaginable that she will permit Devotion to induce

duce a yet greater and more disagreeable lassitude; so the whole round of her time seems to be a kind of Magick Circle, wherein nothing that is holy must appear. And indeed, 'tis one of the highest stratagems of *Satan* thus to fore-stall their time; and by a perpetual supply of diversions, insensibly steal from them the opportunities of Divine Offices; an artifice by which, I presume he prevails on some, who would startle at his grosser and more apparent temptations.

37. NOR needs he more than the success of this project; for if this habitual neglect of Piety should not finally end in great and criminal commissions, (as 'tis naturally very apt to do) yet his interest is sufficiently secur'd by such a customary omission, which amounts to no less than the living *without God in the world*: a state so hopeless, that when the Apostle recollects to the *Ephesians* the wretchedness of their *Gentile* State, he do's it in those very words, *Eph. 2. 12*. And sure, those that live so under Christianity are not in a better, but worse Condition, by how much the contempt of God is more unpardonable than the ignorance.

38. IT therefore infinitely concerns those who are in danger of so fatal a snare, to look about them, and endeavour to countermine *Satan*, and be as industrious to secure their duty, as he is to supplant it; and to this purpose, one of the usefulest expedients I know,
is

is to be afore-hand with him ; I mean, to make their Devotions the first business of the day ; by which I intend, not only those Ejaculations wherewith we all should open our Eyes, but their more set and solemn Prayers ; a practice so highly expedient to the persons fore-mention'd, that it falls little short of necessary, and that upon several reasons.

39. FIRST, in relation to one of the great ends of Morning Prayer, which is to supplicate the Guidance and Protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not done, till some Lady's dressings are finish'd, 'twill be half a mockery, a most preposterous request, as to the greatest part of the day, which will be past before ; and besides the absurdity, there is danger in it ; for all the preceding time is as it were out-law'd by it, and put from under the Divine Protection. Alas ? are God's safeguards to be only Meridional, to shine out only with the noon-day Sun ? Do they suppose *Satan* keeps their hours, and stirs not abroad 'till the after-noon, that there is no danger either of Corporal or Spiritual mischief, before that time of the day ? Certainly, if *the noise of the harp and the viol*, which *Isaiah* mentions, *Chap. 5. 12.* do not drown it, they may often hear a Morning as well as Evening Passing-bell. With how many others do's the Glass of Life run out, whilst they are at their Looking-glasses ? How many
Bodies

Bodies are maim'd and wounded in the time they are Trimming and Decking theirs? And *who made them differ from others*, 1 *Corin.* 4. 7. Or what tenure have they in the safety of one moment, save what they owe to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. **N**OR are the spiritual dangers less, but rather much more; and they must be very slight observers of themselves, if they do not discern that snares may be laid for them in their recesses in their Chambers, as well as in places of the most publick resort. Indeed, were there no other than what relates to their dress, and curiosity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger; scarce any part of that but carrying a temptation in it: to Pride, if it hit right, and please their phansie: to Anger and Vexation, if it do not. They had need therefore to put on their armour before their ornaments, by a prepossession of Prayer and Meditation, to secure their vitals, lest by an internal death of Grace, their bodies (in their utmost lustre) prove but the painted sepulchers of their Souls.

41. **I**N the second place, this appears requisite in opposition to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted an estimate do they make of things that post-pone the interest of their Souls, to the meanest member of their bodies, pay a super-erogating

Q

at-

tendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But, what is yet worse, how vile a contumely is offer'd to the Majesty of God, who is us'd as they do their dunning Creditors, posted off with an excuse of no leisure yet to speak with him; whilst in the mean time, all the factors for their vanity can have ready access and full audience. God must wait till their Tailor, their Shoe-maker please to dismiss them, and at the best, can be allow'd only to bring up the rear of a whole shole of Artificers.

42. BUT thirdly, 'tis very doubtful whether he shall obtain so much from them; for it may often happen, that he shall be quite precluded, so numerous are the parts of a modish equipage, and so exact a symmetry is requir'd in the whole, that 'tis the business of many hours to compleat it; when, as 'twas said of the Roman Ladies, a Council must be call'd about the placing of an hair that sits irregularly, when one thing after another shall be try'd, and again rejected, as not exact, or not becoming; time all the while insensibly steals away, and tho' that will not stay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their bellies begin to murmur to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the next turn; and between these two competitors, 'tis odds Devotion will be quite excluded, or reduc'd only to a Grace before meat: (and well if that, considering
how

how unfashionable even that is grown) in the mean time, what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the one necessary business of the day to such uncertainties, nay almost to a certain disappointment?

43. YET suppose this hazard were only imaginary, and a Lady were infallibly sure not to lose the time for her Prayers; yet in the fourth place she will be likely by such preceding diversions to lose much of her zeal in them, so that if they be said at all, they will scarce be said in a due manner, There is, alas! such a repugnancy in our nature, to any thing spiritual, that we cannot close therewith in an instant; but as a benumm'd frozen body will need some rubbing and chafing, before it can be fit for motion; so our more frozen Souls require some previous incitations, before they can with any vigour exert themselves in Devotion. Now sure the dressing time (I mean such a dressing as we now suppose) is not very proper for such preparations. 'Tis, on the contrary, extreamly apt to indispose and unfit them; for when the phanſy is possess'd with so many little images of vanity, they will not easily be ejected. That ranging faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remotest diversions; but when it has such a stock ready at hand, how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguishing of Devotion.

Q²

44. WHEN

44. WHEN all these considerations are put together, 'twill sure appear wholesome counsel, that such persons should not trust so important a duty to so many casualties; but in the first place secure a time for that, repair to their Oratory before their Dressing-room, and by an early consecration of themselves to God, defeat *Satan's* claim, and discourage his attempts for the rest of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing of a good ending: but in Spiritual things the influence is yet greater, because it draws in Auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther assistances of Grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this duty is sincerely and fervently perform'd in the morning, it will not totally be neglected in the succeeding parts of the day. 'Twill be easy to discern the same obligation, the same advantage of closing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when those two boundaries are secur'd, when those are look'd upon as strict duty, and constantly observ'd, 'tis not unlikely but their Piety may grow generous, and with *David*, *Psal.* 55. 17 add to the *evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where Devotion is real, 'tis apt to be progressive: and the more we converse with God, the more we shall desire to do so. Thus we see how this little cloud, like that of *Elijah*, 1 *King* 18. 45. may *over-spread the Heavens*

Heavens; and this handful of first-fruits may hallow the whole day.

45. NAY indeed, when it has advanc'd thus far, 'twill probably go farther; 'twill not keep it self only on the defensive part, but invade it's opposites, get daily ground of those vanities; by which it was before oppress'd. For when a Lady has in her Closet wash'd her cheeks with penitential tears, she cannot sure, when she comes out, think them prepar'd for the varnish of the paint and *fucus*. When she has attentively examin'd her Conscience, that impartial mirror, and there discern'd all the blemishes of her nobler part, she will sure, with somewhat a more cold concern, consult her Looking-glass. And when she has by pious vows and resolutions, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 13. 14.* 'twill be impossible for her to be very anxiously careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind, will by a holy *leger-de-main* shuffle the Romances out of her hand, and substitute the Oracles of Truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantastick scenes, and elaborate nothing; but prompt her *to give all diligence to make her Calling and Election sure.* In a word, when she once understands what it is to spend one hour devoutly, she will endeavour to rescue all the rest from trifles and impertinent entertainments; and employ them to purposes more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may she almost insensibly

sibly wind her self out of the snare, disentangle her self from those temptations wherewith she was enwrapp'd; and by having *her heart so set at liberty, may run the ways of God's Commandments, Psal. 119.*

46. BUT private Devotion, tho' of excellent effect, cannot commute for the omission of publick; nor indeed can it long maintain it's vigour, unless sometimes cherish'd by the warmth of Christian Assemblies; and if God please to visit them in their Closets, they are even by their own Laws of Civility, oblig'd to return his visits, and attend him in his House. I fear too many adapt the instance in the formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. 'Tis true, those that pay him a cordial Reverence at home, will certainly do it in the Church, and therefore by the little we see perform'd by some there, we may doubt God sees as little in their Retirements. But what speak I of an hearty Reverence, when 'tis visible that there are those who pay none at all? How rare a sight is it for some Ladies to appear at Church? How many times (I had almost said hundreds) do we see their Coaches stand at the Playhouse, for once at God's? They seem to own no distinction of days, unless it be, that Sunday is their most vacant season to take Physick, or to lye a-bed; and if such do ever come to Church, Devotion is like to be the least part
of

of their errand; some new Garment perhaps or Dress is to be shew'd, and that thought the place where the most critical Judges of those things will be most at leisure to observe them; or if they come not to teach new Fashions, it may be they come to learn, and such Documents will be surer to be put in practice, than any in the Sermon. Possibly they expect to see some Friend or Acquaintance there, and as if Christ were to be serv'd (as he was born) in an Inn, make his House the common rendezvous, in which they meet their Associates. If they have any more ingenuous attractives 'tis commonly that of curiosity, to hear some new celebrated Preacher, and that rather for his Rhetorick than his Divinity: and this Motive (tho' the best of the set) is but like that which prevail'd with those *Jews* St. *John* mentions, who came to *Jesus* that they might see *Lazarus*, *John* 12.

47. I shall not rank among these Motives that of Hypocrisie and seeming Holiness, for from that all the rest do acquit them. Indeed 'tis the only sin which this Age has seem'd to reform, and that too only by way of *Antiprism*, not by the Vertue, but the Iniquity of the times. Religion is grown so unfashionable, so contemptible, that none can now be tempted to put on so ridiculous a disguise. And although as to single persons, I confess Hypocrisie one of the deepest guilts, such as has a peculiar portion

portion assign'd it by Christ in the place of torment, *Matth.* 24. 51. yet as to Communities, I cannot but think it better to have a face of Religion than Prophaneness. The example of the former may work beyond it's self, and the form of Godliness in some may produce the power of it in others; but a pattern of prophaneness, the farther it operates, the worse, and all the progress it can make, is from one wickedness to another: so that I fear, as St. *Bernard* wish'd for his Feaver again, so the Church may e're long for her Hypocrites.

48. BUT to recall my self from this digression, let us a little enquire how those, whom the foremention'd Motives bring to Church, behave themselves there; and that is indeed with great Conformity to the ends of their coming; their errand is not to be Suppliants, neither do they put themselves in the posture: kneeling is impertinent for them, who mean not to pray; but as the Apostle describes the Idolatrous service of the *Israelites*, *They sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*; so these sit down to talk and laugh with their Pew-fellows, and rise up to gape and look about them. When they should be confessing their Sins to Almighty God, they are apologizing (perhaps) to one another, for the omission of a ceremonious visit, or some other breach of civility; when they should be *observ-*
ing

ing the goings of God in the Sanctuary, *Psal. 68.* they are enquiring when this Lady came to Town, and when that goes out; nay, perhaps, the Theater is brought into the Temple, the last Play they saw, is recollected, and Quotations enough brought thence to vie with the Preacher. 'Tis impossible to reckon up all their Topicks of discourse, nay, it were scandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know, by how many impertinencies (to say no worse) they prophane that holy Place and Time.

49. BUT that All-seeing Eye, in whose Presence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them, not only with the principal, but the product; not only with their own Irreverences, but with those which by their example or encouragement, they have occasion'd in others; nay farther, even with that scandal that redounds to Christianity by it. For when one that is to choose a Religion, shall read the Precepts of *Pythagoras*, enjoyn- ing that the gods must not be worship'd in passing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greatest solemnity and intention; when they shall consider the care of *Numa* in instituting Officers, who at Sacrifices, and all Divine Services, should call upon the people to keep silence and advert to Devotion; or but the practice of the present *Mahometans*, who permit none to sit in their *Mosques*, nor to pray without prostration: when, I say, this is consider'd

R

and

and compar'd with the scandalous indecency observable in our Churches, he will certainly exclude Christianity from all competition in his choice, nor allow that the name of a Religion, whose very Worship appears so profane, and whose Votaries mock the God they pretend to serve.

50. YET how severe soever the charge may lye against some, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many Ladies whose Examples are reproaches to the other Sex, that help to fill our Congregations, when Gentlemen desert them, and to whom sometimes we alone owe, that our Churches are not furnish'd like the Feast in the Parable, *Luke 14. 21.* merely out of *high ways and hedges, with the poor and the maim'd, the halt and the blind*; yet some even of these may be lyable to some irregularity, which may be the effect of inadvertency or mis-perwasion, tho' not of contempt or prophaneness.

51. AND first, 'tis observable in some who come constantly, that yet they come not early, so that a considerable part of Prayers is past e're they enter the Church. This first causes some disturbance to others, the successive entry of new comers, keeping the Congregation in a continual Motion and Agitation, which how unagreeable it is to Devotion, *Numa* a Heathen Prince may teach us, who, as *Plutarch* tells us, took a particular care, that in the time of

of Divine Worship, no knocking, clapping, or other noise should be heard; as well knowing how much the Operations of the Intellect are obstructed, by any thing that importunes the Senses. What would he have said, should he have come into one of our City-congregations, where often during the whole time of Prayer, the clapping of Pew-doors do's out-noise the Reader?

§2. BUT besides the indecency of the thing, and the interruption it gives to others, 'tis very injurious to themselves; a kind of partial Excommunication of their own inflicting, which excludes them from a part of the Divine offices, and from that part too which is of the most universal concern, I mean the Confession of Sins, which the wisdom of our Church has fitly plac'd in the beginning of her Service, as the necessary introduction to all the rest. For considering how obnoxious we are all to the Wrath and Vengeance of God, our first business is to deprecate that, by an humble Confession of our Guilt. Would any Malefactor that had forfeited his Life to Justice, come boldly to his Prince, and without taking notice of his Crimes, importune Him to bestow the greatest Favours and Dignities upon him? Yet 'tis the very same abrupt impudence in us, to supplicate the Divine Majesty, before we attempt to atone him; to ask good things from Him, before we have acknowledg'd the

ill we have done against Him. And to such God may justly make such a return, as *Augustus* did to one that had entertain'd him much below his Greatness, I knew not before that we were such familiars.

53. IT will much better become them to anticipate the time, *to wait at the posts of his doors, Prov. 8. 34.* and contrive to be there before the Service begins, that so by previous recollection, they may put their Minds in a fit posture of address at the publick Audience: which (by the way) speaks it to be no very laudable custom, which almost universally prevails, that those few who do come early spend the interval before Service, in talking with one another, by which they do not only lose the advantage of that time for preparation; but convert it into the quite contrary, and do thereby actually unfit and indispose themselves. God knows, our Hearts, even in the most compos'd Temper, are too apt to create Diversions; we need not start Game for them to Chase, and by prefacing our Prayers with secular discourse, make a gap for the same thoughts to return upon us in them. Besides, in relation to the place, it has a spice of prophaneness, 'tis the bringing the *Moabite* and the *Ammonite* into the Temple, *Deut. 23. 3.* a kind of Invasion on God's propriety, by introducing our Worldly concerns, as Divertisements into the House which is call'd by his Name, solemnly Dedicated to Him,

Him, and therefore Dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to such apply the exhortatory reproof of the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 11. 22. *What, have ye not houses to talk and converse in, or despise ye the Church of God?* But this is, I confess, a reproof that will not reach to many, there being so few of the better sort that come early enough to talk before Service; and as for those who talk at it, we have already rank'd them under another *Classis*. Yet give me leave to add, that those fall not much short of that degree of prophaneness, who come late only because they are loth to rise, or to abate any thing of the curiosity of their drefs. For she that prefers her sloth or her vanity before God's Service, is like (how decently soever she behaves her self) to give but an insignificant attendance at it.

54. BUT I guess this may in many proceed from another cause, which, tho' less ill in their intention, is not so in respect either of it's unreasonableness, or it's effects; and that is an unequal estimate they make of the parts of God's Service. This last Age has brought in such a partiality for Preaching, that Prayer seems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) despicable in their Eyes: so that if they can but come time enough to the Sermon, they think they have discharg'd their weightier part of the Law, and of their own Duty. This mis-

per-

perswasion, tho' it has too generally diffus'd it self through both Sexes, yet it seems to have been very especially imbib'd by the Female. And besides the evidence that Sunday gives, the week-days afford no less. Let there be a Lecture, tho' at the remotest part of the Town, what hurrying is there to it? But let the Bell Toll never so loud, for the Canonical hours of Common-Prayer, twill not call the nearest of the Neighbourhood. I speak not of those who are at defiance with our Service, and have lifted themselves in separate Congregations; (for I intend not to trace them through their wild mazes) but of those who yet own our Church, and object not at it's Offices, but only have suffer'd their value for them to be insensibly undermin'd by their greater zeal for Preaching. God sure intends an harmony in all Sacred Ordinances, and would not have them set up a party against each other, but mutually assist each others operation upon us. Thus Prayer disposes us to receive benefit by Preaching, and Preaching teaches us how to Pray aright; and God grant we may long enjoy the publick opportunities of both. Yet since this Age has brought them to a competition, I must take leave to say, that if we come impartially to weigh Prayer and Preaching, the balance will incline another way than it seems with many to do, and we shall find Prayer the more essential part of Religion.

55. THE end of Preaching is two-fold, either to teach us what we know not, or to excite us to practise what we already know : now in relation to the first of these ends, I suppose there is a wide difference between Preaching at the first promulgation of the Gospel and now. 'Twas then the only way of revealing to the World the whole Mystery of our Salvation ; so that the Apostle's inference was then irrefragable, *How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* Rom. 10. 14. But where Christianity is planted, and the New Testament receiv'd we have therein the whole Doctrine of Christ ; nay, we have not only the matter, but the very form of those Sermons which Christ and his Apostles Preach'd ; so that unless we think them not sufficiently gifted, we cannot but acknowledge we have in them ample instruction both for Faith and Manners ; enough, as the Apostle speaks, *to make us wise unto Salvation,* 2 Tim. 3. 15. And the Reading of those being a considerable part of our Churches Service, we have the most genuine Preaching, even before the Minister ascends the Pulpit. Besides, for the help of those whose Youth or incapacity disables them from making collections thence for themselves, our Church has Epitomiz'd the most necessary points of Belief and Practice in the Catechism, not (as the Roman) to preclude their far-

farther search, but to supply them in the interim 'till they are qualify'd for it; and by that early infusion of Christian Principles, to secure them of that knowledge which is simply necessary to their Salvation.

56. Now sure, to people in this State, Preaching is not of so absolute necessity in respect of instruction, as it was for those who from Heathenism and Idolatry were to be brought first to the knowledge, and then to the faith of Christ. We seem therefore now more generally concern'd in the other end of Preaching, the exciting us to practice; for alas! there are few of us who stumble on sin for want of Light; but either through heedlessness, and want of looking before us, or else by a wilful prostration of our selves to it; so that we often need to be rous'd out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our stubbornness, and by a close application of those Truths we either forget, or suppress, be animated to our Duty. And for this purpose Preaching is doubtless of excellent use; and the nauseating of it shews a very sick constitution of the Mind; yet sure the over-greedy desire may be a Disease also. He that eats more than he can concoct, do's not so much assist as depress nature; and those that run from Sermon to Sermon, that allow themselves no time to chew, much less to digest what they hear, will sooner confound their brains, than
better

better their lives. Nay, it oft betrays them to a very pernicious delusion; it diverts them from many of the practical parts of Piety, and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily Pious; and by their belief, that Religion consists principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themselves by that more infallible test of doing God's Will. So that whereas God never design'd Preaching for more than a guide in their way, they make it their way, and their end too; and Hearing must, like a circle, begin and terminate in its self.

57. I am sure in secular concerns, we should think him a very unprofitable servant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, should be so transported with hearing his instructions, that he should desire to have it infinitely repeated, and so spend the time wherein he should do the work. And we have reason to think God will make the same judgement of those who do the like in his service.

58. ONE would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing should supersede all niceness in it; yet we find it do's not, and that some make a shift to be at once voracious and squeamish. If this spiritual Food be not artificially dress'd, 'tis too gross for their palats: the Phrase must be elegant, the words well accented, and the *enticing words of man's*
S *wisdom,*

wisdom, which St. *Paul* disclaims in his preaching, 1 *Corinth.* 2. 4. is that which they principally regard. Nay the memory of the Preacher becomes the most material point of his Sermon, and the first glance on his Book prejudices him. I need not add the extravagancies of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence of phantastick gesture, wherein the Soul and vital efficacy of Preaching has been solemnly plac'd. Now 'tis evident, all these are but trivial Accomplishments; so that those who insist so much on them, do make Preaching much less Sacred and Divine than indeed it is; and therefore cannot without absurdity lay the main stress of Religion upon it, or make that the highest of God's ordinances, which owes all it's gratefulness with them to the endowments of Men. Some may think I pursue this subject too far, but I am sure I do it not with design to derogate from the just respect due to Preaching; only I would not have it monopolize our esteem, or jostle out another duty, which is of more constant use, and indispensable necessity.

59. AND such certainly is Prayer, that respiration of the Soul, which is so necessary, that it admits not of long intermission, and therefore seems to carry the same proportion to hearing, which breathing do's to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet

yet subsist; but if we should do so in breathing, we cannot recover it. Prayer is like the Morning and Evening Sacrifice under the Law, which God ordain'd, should be perpetual; whereas Preaching is but like the Readings in the Synagogues on the Sabbaths and Festivals. Indeed, however we have confounded the terms, 'tis Prayer only that can properly be call'd the worship of God; 'tis that by which we pay him his solemn homage, acknowledging his sovereignty, and our own dependance. When he hear, we do no more than what every disciple do's to his master; but when we pray, we own him as the spring and source of all the good we expect, as the Author of our Being, and the Object of our Adoration: in a word, we do by it profess him our God; it being an impress of meer natural Religion, to supplicate the Deity we acknowledge.

60. AND as by Prayer we render the greatest honour to God, so likewise do we procure the greatest advantages to our selves. Prayer is the powerful engine, by which we draw down blessings; 'tis the key which lets us into the immense store-house of the Almighty; nay, 'tis that upon which the efficacy of Preaching depends. The word is but a dead letter without the spirit; and God has promis'd the spirit to none but those that ask it, *Luke* 11. 13. So that Prayer is that which enlivens

and inspirits our most sacred actions, and accordingly in scripture we find it still a concomitant in all Ecclesiastical concerns. When an Apostle was to be substituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they referr'd it not to the decision of lots, 'till God, who had the sole disposing of them, *Prov.* 16. 33. had been invok'd by solemn Prayer, *Acts* 1. 24. So when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were to be separated to the Ministry, though the appointment was by the Holy Ghost, yet that superseded not the necessity of Prayer; the Apostles pray'd (yea, and fasted too) before they lay'd their hands on them, *Acts* 13. 3. Nay our blessed Saviour himself, tho' he knew what was in Man, and needed no guidance, but his own Omniscience in his choice; yet we find that before his election of the twelve Apostles, he continu'd a whole night in Prayer to God, *Luke* 6. 12. doubtless, to teach us how requisite Prayer is in all our important interests, which like the pillar of Cloud and Fire to the *Israelites*, is our best convoy through the wilderness, through all the snares and temptations, through all the calamities and distresses of this World, and our most infallible guide to the Land of Promise.

61. AND sure when all these are the properties of Prayer, tho' private, they will not less belong to the publick. Such a conspiracy and union of importunate Devotion, must have

have a proportionable increase in it's effect : and if Heaven can suffer violence by the fervour of one single Votary, with what storms, what batteries will it be forc'd by a numerous Congregation? We find the Church is, by Christ, compar'd to *an Army with banners*, Cant. 6. 10. but sure never is this Army in so good array, in so invincible a posture, as upon it's knees. The Ecclesiastical story tells us of a Legion of Christians in *Aurelius's* Camp, who in that posture discomfited two assailants at once, the enemy and the drought; that breath which they sent up in Prayers, like a kindly exhalation return'd in rain, and reliev'd the perishing Army : and had we but the same fervour, and the same innocence, could we lift up as pure hands as they did, there would be no blessing beyond our reach. But the less any of us find our selves so qualify'd, the more need we have to put our selves among those that are.

62. THERE is an happy contagion in goodness; like green wood, we may perhaps be kindled by the neighbouring flame; the example of another's zeal may awake mine. However, there is some advantage in being in the company : those showers of benediction which their Prayers bring down, are so plentiful, that some drops at least may scatter upon those about them. We find *Elisha*, for *Jehoshaphat's* sake, endur'd the presence of *Jehoram*,

horam, whom otherwise he professes he would not have look'd towards, 2 *Kings* 3. 14. and God may perhaps do the like in this case; and as he prosper'd *Potiphar* for *Joseph's* sake *Gen.* 39. 5. so the Piety of some few may redound to the benefit of all. From all these considerations, I suppose, may sufficiently be evinc'd the necessity and benefit of publick Prayer, and consequently the unreasonableness of those, who upon any pretence neglect it. I shall now only beseech those to whom I speak, to make the application to themselves, and to shew they do so by their more early and more assiduous attendance on it.

63. THERE is also another duty to which many of those to whom I write seem to need incitation, and that is, Communicating; a part of Devotion which the looser sort scarce ever think in season till their death-bed: as if that Sacrament, like the Romanist's Extreme Unction, was only fit for expiring Souls. But to such we may apply the words of the Angel to the Women, *Luke* 24. 5. *Why seek ye the living among the dead?* Why think ye that the Sun of Righteousness is only to shine in the shade of death, or that Christ is never to give us his flesh, till we are putting off our own? 'Tis one principal end of that Sacrament to engage and enable us to a new life. How preposterous then is it, how utterly

utterly inconsistent with that end to defer it to the hour of death? 'Tis true, 'tis a good *Viaticum* for such as are in their way towards blifs: but it is too bold a hope, to fancy that it shall in an instant bring them into that way, who have their whole life posted on in the contrary. The roads to Heaven and Hell lye sure too far asunder to be within distance of one step; nor can it with any safety be presum'd that once receiving it at their death, shall expiate so many willfull neglects of it in their life.

64. BUT I shall suppose these total omissions are not a common guilt: yet with many others the fault differs only in degree: they do not wholly omit, but yet come so unfrequently, as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is observable in many, who seem to give good attendance on other parts of Divine Worship. For indeed, 'tis a sad spectacle to see, that, let a Church be never so much crouded at Sermon, 'tis emptied in an instant when the Communion begins: people run, as it were, frighted from it, as if they thought with those in *Malachi*, that *the table of the Lord is polluted*, *Mal. 1. 12.* that some pest or infection would thence break forth upon them. A strange indignity to the Majesty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but some great Man make
a pu-

a publick entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the pressing multitude? many officers are necessary to repell uninvited guests: and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, tho' the invitation be more general, and the Treat infinitely more magnificent.

65. I know this fault (like many other) shrouds it self under a fair disguise, and this barbarous neglect pretends to the humblest veneration. People say, 'tis their great reverence they have for the Sacrament, that keeps them at so great a distance; but sure that is but a fictitious reverence, which discards obedience; and when Christ commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like stubbornness and rebellion, than awe and respect. I suppose we pretend not to exceed the Primitive Christians in humility and godly fear, and yet they communicated daily: and therefore sure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce such contrary effects. Indeed 'tis to be fear'd, that many put a great cheat upon themselves in this matter. The Eucharist is justly accounted the highest of Divine Ordinances; and those who think of no preparation in other, yet have some general impressions of the necessity of it in this: but the uneasiness of the task discourages them, they dare not come without a Wedding-garment, and yet are loth to be at the pains to put it on:

on: so that all this goodly pretext of reverence is but the Devil in *Samuel's* mantle, is but sloth clad in the habit of humility.

66. AND to this temptation of sloth, there is another thing very subservient, and that is the easy and slight opinion which is commonly taken of sins of Omission. Many are startled at great Commissions, think them to carry a face of deformity and horror, who in the mean time look on Omissions only as privations and meer nothings, as if all the affirmative precepts were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, than to oblige our performance; and so were rather overtures and proposals which we may assent to or not, than injunctions which at our peril we must obey. A fancy no less absurd than impious. That God should be content so to compound with his Creatures (and like a Prince overpower'd by his Vassals) consent to remit all their Homage, absolve them from all positive duty, so they would be but so civil as not to fly in his face, or to commit out-rage on his Person. But this wild imagination needs no other confutation, than that form of indictment our Saviour gives us, as the model of that which shall be us'd at the last day, *Matth. 25.* where the whole process lies against sins of omission, and yet the sentence is as dismal and irreversibile, as if all the Commissions in the world had been put into the Bill.

T

67. AND

67. AND certainly of all Omissions none is like to be more severely charged than this of communicating, which is not only a disobedience, but an unkindness, which strikes not only at the Authority, but the Love of our Lord; when he so affects an union with us, that he creates mysteries only to effect it, when he descends even to our sensuality, and because we want spiritual appetites puts himself within reach of our natural; and as he once veil'd his Divinity in flesh, so now he veils even that flesh under the form of our corporal nourishment, only that he may the more indissolvably unite, yea, incorporate himself with us. When I say he do's all this, we are not only impious, but inhuman if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he do's all this upon the most endearing memory of what he has before done for us, when he presents himself to our embraces in the same form wherein he presented himself to God for our expiation, when he shews us those wounds which our iniquities made, those stripes by which we were heal'd, that death by which we are reviv'd, shall we, to compleat the scene of his Passion, force him also to that pathetick complaint, *Lam. 1. 12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?* Shall we instead of smiting our breasts (as did other witnesses of his sufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, 'tis to be fear'd the next degree will be to wag
our

our heads too, and we shall have the prophaness to deride, what we have not the Piety to commemorate.

68. AND this seems to be no improbable fear: for in Religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances; coldness and tepidity will (if not stopp'd in their progress) quickly grow to loathing and contempt. And indeed to what can we more reasonably impute the great overflowings of prophaneness among us, than to our ill-husbanding the means of Grace? Now certainly of all those means, there is none of greater energy and power, than the blessed Sacrament.

69. WERE there no other benefit deriv'd from it, save that which the preparation implies, 'twere very considerable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinite purposes of searching and trying our ways, which else, perhaps, we should infinitely deferr; stops our career in sin, and by acquainting us with our selves, shews us where our danger lyes, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our Souls, and how we must repair them, all which are with many seldom thought of, but when the time of Communicating approaches. We live so far off from our selves, know so little what is done in us, that we answer the description the Prophet makes of the surprize of *Babylon*, of which the King knew nothing, 'till Post after Post ran to inform him;

that his *City was taken at one end*, Jer. 51. 31. We often lye secure, while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if when the Trumpet sounds, none will prepare himself to the battle, if, when the Minister gives warning of a Sacrament, and the preparation it requires, we go our ways, and with *Gallio*, care for none of those things; or with *Felix*, Acts 24. 26. put it off to a convenient time; we willfully expose our selves, and 'tis but just, Christ's dreadful menace should be executed upon us, that we die in our sins, who will frustrate such an opportunity of a rescue from them.

73. BUT 'tis not only this remoter and accidental advantage (this preventing Grace) which the holy Eucharist affords: it contains yet greater and more intrinsick benefits, is a spring of assisting grace also. 'Tis a magazine of Spiritual Artillery, to fortify us against all assaults of the Devil, the great Catholicon for all the maladies of our Souls, that which, if duly receiv'd, will qualify us to make St. Paul's boast, Philip. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.* In a word, 'tis to us whatever we need, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, because it possesses us of him who is so, 1 Cor. 1. 30. so that when-ever we neglect it; we manifestly betray our own interest, and do implicitly choose death, whilst we thus run from life.

71. THUS

71. THUS we see there is a concurrence of all sorts of arguments for this Duty: oh that some (at least) of them may prevail! If we are not tractable enough to do it in Obedience, yet let us be so ingenuous as to do it for Love; for Gratitude; or if for neither of these, let us be at least so wise as to do it for interest and advantage. I know people are apt to pretend business, the Farm and the Oxen must excuse their coming to the Feast; but alas! what business can there be of equal necessity or advantage to this? Yet even that apology is superseded to those I now speak to, who, as I observ'd before, have leisure more than enough, so that it would be one part of the benefit, it's taking up some of their time: let me therefore earnestly beseech them not to grudge a few of their vacant hours to this so happy an employment.

72. DID any of their near friends and relations invite them to an interview, they would not think him too importunate, tho' he repeated the summons weekly, nay daily; but would punctually observe the meeting: and when their Saviour much seldomer entreats their company, shall he not obtain it? must he never see them but at two or three solemn times of the year? And shall they wonder at any intervening invitation (as the *Shunammite's* husband did at her going to the Prophet, when it was *neither new moon nor Sabbath,*
2 Kings

2 *Kings* 4. 23.) and tell him 'tis not yet *Easter* or *Christmas*: this were not only to be irreligious, but rude; and, methinks, those who stand so much upon the punctilio's of civility one to another, should not then only lay aside their good manners, when they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certainly he is not so unpleasant company, that they need shun his converse; if he do appear so to any, 'tis that shunning that is the cause of it. He do's not open his treasures to strangers: they that come now and then for form-sake, no wonder if their entertainment be as cold as their address. They that would indeed *tast how sweet the Lord is*, *Psalms* 34. 8. must by the frequency of their coming, shew the heartiness of it, and then they would indeed find it a *feast of fat things*, as the Prophet speaks.

73. IN a word, let them but make experiment, resolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity, (and withall no due preparation) of Communicating; I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity, but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definite time will prove the beginning of an indefinite, and their resolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole mystery of godliness, in all the œconomy of the Gospel, so expedite, so infallible a means
of

of growth in grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this blessed Sacrament. I cannot therefore more pertinently close this Section, than with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only compleat all their devotions, crown and hallow the rest of their oblations to God, but they will be advanc'd also in all parts of practical Piety. For tho' this and other sacred offices be perform'd in the Church, the efficacy of them is not circumscrib'd within those walls, but follows the devout Soul through all the occurrences of human life.

74. SHE that has intently consider'd the presence of God in the Sanctuary, has learn'd so much of his Ubiquity, that she will not easily forget it in other places, and she that remembers that, will need no other guard to secure her innocence, no other incentive to animate her endeavours, since she is view'd by him who is equally powerful to punish or reward, who regards not the persons of the mighty, nor can be aw'd into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a serious advertence to the divine presence is the most certain curb to all disorderly appetites, as on the contrary, the *not having God before their eyes*, is in Scripture the most comprehensive description of the most wretched profligated state of sin. It concerns therefore all those who aspire to true Piety, to nourish that awful sense in their hearts, as that which will best enable them to
practise

practise the Apostle's advice, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *To cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

75. I am sensible that this Section is spun out to a length very unproportionable to the former; but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement may be allow'd a bulk somewhat answerable to it's use, so upon the same account, the size of this is not unjustifiable; the Piety which this designs to recommend, being the one necessary thing, which must influence all other endowments. We know the coarse resemblance *Solomon* makes of a *fair woman without discretion, that she is like a jewel of Gold in a swine's snout, Prov.* 11. 22. but even that discretion (if any such could be) without Piety, were but the adding one jewel more, exposing another valuable thing to the same despicable ridiculous use. But to speak truly, there is no real discretion, where there is no Religion: and therefore *Solomon* seems in this place to understand by it that practical wisdom, which in the sacred Dialect (his writings especially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. 'Tis true, there may be a rallying wit to scoff and abuse, a serpentine wiliness to undermine and deceive; but that sort of wisdom (like that of *Achitophel*) finally converts into foolishness, do's very often appear to do so in this life, but must certainly in the next, because it builds upon a
false

false bottom, prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither beauty nor wit, (the two celebrated accomplishments of Women) so will neither greatness nor honour give any advantages without Piety, 'twill only (as hath been already observ'd) make them more exemplary sinners, enflame the account, and so expose them to a greater degree of condemnation: for sure 'tis not their Sex that will rescue them from the dismal denunciation of the wise Man, *Wisd.* 6. 6. *Mighty men shall be mightily tormented.* I conclude all with another irrefragable Maxim of the same Author, *Whether one be rich, noble, or poor, their glory is the fear of the Lord.*



U

THE



THE LADIES CALLING.

PART II. SECT. I.

Of Virgins.

I.



WE have taken a view of those general qualifications, which are at once the Duty and the Ornament of the Female Sex consider'd at large: These, like the common *Genus*, involve all. But there are also specifick differences arising from the several circumstances and states of Life, some whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former Virtues, and all may have some distinct and peculiar

cular requisites adapted to that peculiar state and condition: and these our propos'd method engages us now to consider. Human Life is full of vicissitudes and changes, so that 'tis impossible to enumerate all the lesser accidental alterations, to which it is lyable. But the principal and most distinct scenes, in which a Woman can be suppos'd regularly to be an actor, are these three, *Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood*: which as they differ widely from each other, so for the discharging of their respective duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

2. VIRGINITY is first in order of time, and if we will take St. Paul's judgement, in respect of excellence also, 1 Cor. 7. And indeed, she that preserves her self in that state upon the account he mentions, *ver. 34. that she may care for the things that are of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit,* deserves a great deal of veneration, as making one of the nearest approaches to the Angelical State. And accordingly, in the primitive times, such a Virginity was had in singular estimation, and by the assignment of the School-men, hath a particular coronet of glory belonging to it. Nay, even among the Heathens, a consecrated Virgin was look'd on as a thing most sacred. The Roman Vestals had extraordinary privileges allow'd them by the State: and they were generally held in such
reverence,

reverence, that testaments, and other depositories of the greatest trust were usually committed to their custody, as to the surest and most inviolable Sanctuary. Nay, their presence was so to convicted Malefactors; the Magistrates veiling their *fascies* when they appear'd, and giving up the criminal to the commanding intercession of Virgin innocence.

3. As for the religious orders of Virgins, in the present Roman Church, tho' some, and those very great abuses have crept in; yet I think 'twere to be wish'd, that those who suppress'd them in this Nation, had confin'd themselves within the bounds of Reformation, by chusing rather to rectify and regulate, than abolish them.

4. BUT tho' there be not among us such Societies, yet there may be *Nuns* who are not profess'd. She who has devoted her heart to God, and the better to secure his interest against the most insinuating rival of human love, intends to admit none, and prays that she may not, do's by those humble purposes consecrate her self to God; and perhaps more acceptably, than if her presumption should make her more positive, and engage her in a vow she is not sure to perform.

5. BUT this is a case do's not much need stating in our clime, wherein Women are so little transported with this zeal of voluntary Virginity, that there are but few can find
patience

patience for it when necessary. An old Maid is now thought such a curse, as no Poetick Fury can exceed, look'd on as the most calamitous creature in nature. And I so far yield to the opinion, as to confess it to those who are kept in that state against their wills; but sure the original of that misery is from the desire, not the restraint of Marriage: let them but suppress that once, and the other will never be their infelicity. But I must not be so unkind to the Sex, as to think 'tis always such desire that gives them an aversion to Celibacy; I doubt not, many are frighted only with the vulgar contempt, under which that state lyes: for which if there be no cure, yet there is the same armour against this, which is against all other causeless reproaches, *viz.* to condemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the case. If the super-annuated Virgins would behave themselves with gravity and reservedness, addict themselves to the strictest Virtue and Piety, they would give the World some cause to believe 'twas not their necessity, but their choice which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engaged to a better Amour, espoused to the Spiritual Bride-groom; and this would give them among the soberer sort, at least the reverence and esteem of Matrons. Or if after all caution and endeavour, they chance to fall under the tongues of malicious slanderers;

slanderers; this is no more than happens in all other instances of duty: and if contempt be to be avoided, Christianity it self must be quitted as well as Virgin-chastity. But if on the other side, they endeavour to disguise their Age by all the impostures and gayeties of a youthful dress and behaviour, if they still herd themselves among the youngest and vainest company, betray a young mind in an aged body; this must certainly expose them to scorn and censure. If no Play, no Ball, no dancing-meeting can escape them, people will undoubtedly conclude, that they believe to put off themselves, to meet with Chapmen, who so constantly keep the Fairs. I wish therefore they would more universally try the former expedients, which I am confident are the best Amulet against the reproach they so much dread, and may also deliver them from the danger of a more costly remedy; I mean that of an unequal and imprudent match, which many have rush'd upon as they have ran frighted from the other, and so by an unhappy contradiction, do both stay long, and marry hastily, gall their necks to spare their ears, and run into the yoke rather, than hear so slight and unreasonable a reproach. They need not, I think, be upbraided with the folly of such an election, since their own experience is (to many of them) but too severe a Monitor. I shall not insist farther on this,

this, but having given the elder Virgins that ensign of their seniority, as to stand first in my discourse; I shall now address more generally to the rest.

6. AND here the two grand Elements essential to the Virgin-state, are Modesty and Obedience, which though necessary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree requir'd here. And therefore, though I have spoken largely of the virtue of Modesty in the first part of this Tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make some farther reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom Modesty should appear in it's highest elevation, and should come up to shamefacedness. Her look, her speech, her whole behaviour, should own an humble distrust of her self; she is to look on her self but as a Novice, a Probationer in the world, and must take this time rather to learn and observe, than to dictate and prescribe. Indeed, there is scarce any thing looks more indecent, than to see a young maid too forward and confident in her talk. 'Tis the opinion of the wise man, *Ecclus. 32. 7.* that *a young man should scarce speak, tho' twice ask'd*: in proportion to which, 'twill sure not become a young woman, whose Sex puts her under greater restraints, to be either importunate or magisterial in her discourse. And tho' that which former Ages call'd boldness, is now only assurance and good breeding, yet we have seen
such

such bad superstructures upon that foundation, as sure will not much recommend it to any considering person.

7. BUT there is another breach of Modesty, as it relates to Chastity, in which they are yet more especially concern'd. The very name of Virgin imports a most critical niceness in that point. Every indecent curiosity, or impure fancy, is a deflowering of the mind, and every the least corruption of them, gives some degrees of defilement to the body too. For between the state of pure immaculate Virginity, and arrant prostitution, there are many intermediate steps; and she that makes any of them, is so far departed from her first Integrity. She that listens to any wanton discourse, has violated her ears; she that speaks any, her tongue; every immodest glance vitiates her eye, and every the lightest act of dalliance, leaves something of stain and sullage behind it. There is therefore a most rigorous caution requisite herein: for as nothing is more clean and white than a perfect Virginity, so every the least spot or soil is the more discernable. Besides, youth is for the most part flexible, and easily wraps into a crookedness, and therefore can never set it self too far from a temptation. Our tender blossoms we are fain to skreen and shelter, because every unkindly air nips and destroys them: and nothing can be more nice and delicate than a maiden-

virtue, which ought not to be expos'd to any of those malignant airs which may blast and corrupt it; of which God knows there are too many, some that blow from within, and others from without.

8. OF the first sort, there is none more mischievous than Curiosity, a temptation which foil'd human nature even in Paradise: and therefore surely a feeble girl ought not to trust her self with that, which subdu'd her better fortify'd Parent. The truth is, an affected ignorance cannot be so blameable in other cases, as it is commendable in this. Indeed, it is the surest and most invincible Guard; for she who is curious to know indecent things, 'tis odds but she will too soon and too dearly buy the learning. The suppressing and detesting all such Curiosities is therefore that eminent fundamental piece of Continence I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and secure all the rest.

9. BUT when they have set this guard upon themselves, they must provide against foreign assaults too; the most dangerous whereof I take to be ill company and idleness. Against the first they must provide by a prudent choice of conversation, which should generally be of their own Sex; yet not all of that neither, but such who will at least entertain them innocently, if not profitably. Against the second they may secure themselves

selves by a constant series of employments : I mean, not such frivolous ones as are more idle than doing nothing, but such as are ingenuous, and some way worth their time : wherein as the first place is to be given to the offices of Piety, so in the intervals of those there are divers others, by which they may not unusefully fill up the vacancies of their time, such are the acquiring of any of those ornamental improvements which become their Quality, as Writing, Needle-work, Languages, Musick, or the like. If I should here insert the art of Oeconomy and household-managery, I should not, I think, affront them in it; that being the most proper Feminine business, from which neither wealth nor greatness can totally absolve them : and a little of the Theory in their Parent's house, would much assist them towards the Practice when they come to their own. In a word, there are many parts of knowledge useful for Civil as well as Divine life ; and the improving themselves in any of those, is a rational employment.

10. BUT I confess I know not how to reduce to that head many of those things which from the diversions are now stepped up to be the solemn business of many young Ladies, (and I doubt of some old.) Such is in the first place Gaming, a recreation whose lawfulness I question not, whilst it keeps with-

in the bounds of a recreation : but when it sets up for a Calling, I know not whence it derives it's licence. And a Calling sure it seems to be with some ; a laborious one too, such as they toil night and day at, nay, do not allow themselves that remission which the Laws both of God and Man have provided for the meanest Mechanick. The Sabbath is to them no day of rest, but this trade go's on when all Shops are shut. I know not how they satisfy themselves in such an habitual wast of their time, (besides all the incidental faults of avarice and anger) but I much doubt that plea, whatsoever it is which passes with them, will scarce hold weight at his Tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem*, not fling away our *time*.

II. THERE is another thing to which some devote a very considerable part of their time, and that is the reading of *Romances*, which seems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming study of young Ladies. I confess their youth might a little adapt 'em to them when they were children, and I wish they were always in their event as harmless ; but I fear they often leave ill impressions behind them. Those amorous passions, which 'tis their design to paint to the utmost Life, are apt to insinuate themselves into their unwary readers, and by an unhappy inversion, a Copy shall produce an Original. When a poor young

young Creature shall read there of some triumphant beauty, that has I know not how many captiv'd Knights prostrate at her feet, she will probably be tempted to think it a fine thing; and may reflect how much she loses time, that has not yet subdu'd one heart: and then her business will be to spread her nets, lay her toils to catch some body who will more fatally ensnare her. And when she has once wound her self into an Amour, those Authors are subtle Casuists for all difficult cases that may occur in it, will instruct in the necessary artifices of deluding Parents and Friends, and put her ruin perfectly in her own power. And truly this seems to be so natural a consequence of this sort of study, that of all the divertisements that look so innocently, they can scarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed, 'tis very difficult to imagine, what vast mischief is done to the World, by the false notions and images of things; particularly of Love and Honour, those noblest concerns of human life, represented in their Mirrours. But when we consider upon what principles the Duellists and Hectors of the Age defend their Out-rages, and how great a Devotion is paid to Lust, instead of Virtuous Love, we cannot be to seek for that Gospel, which makes these Doctrines appear Orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, they may be innocent, or otherwise,

wife, according as they are managed. The common intercourse of Civility is a debt to Humanity, and therefore mutual visits may often be necessary, and so (in some degree) may several harmless and healthful recreations be which may call them abroad; for I write not now to Nuns, and have no purpose to confine them to a Cloister. Yet on the other side to be always wandering is the condition of a vagabond; and of the two, 'tis better to be a Prisoner to one's home, than a Stranger. *Solomon* links it with some very illaudable qualities of a Woman, *Proverbs* 7. 11. that *her feet abide not in her house*; and 'tis an unhappy impotence not to be able to stay at home, when there is any thing to be seen abroad: that any Mask or Revel, any jollity of others must be their rack and torment, if they cannot get to it. Alas! such meetings are not so sure to be safe, that they had need be frequent, and they are of all others least like to be safe to those, who much dote on them. And therefore those that find they do so, had need to counterbias their minds, and set them to something better, and by more serious entertainments supplant those vanities, which at the best are childish, and may often prove worse, it being too probable that those *Dinahs* which are still gadding, tho' on pretence *to see only the daughters of the Land*, *Genesis* 34. may at last meet with a *son of Hamor*.

13. THERE is also another great devourer of time subservient to the former, I mean dressing: for they that love to be seen much abroad, will be sure to be seen in the most exact form. And this is an employment that do's not steal, but challenge their time; what they waste here, is *cum Privilegio*, it being by the verdict of this Age the proper business, the one science wherein the young Lady is to be perfectly vers'd: so that now all virtuous emulation is to be converted into this single ambition, who shall excel in this faculty. A vanity this, which I confess is more excusable in the younger than the elder sort; they being supposable not yet to have outworn the reliques of their Child-hood, to which toys and gayety were proportionable. Besides, 'tis sure allowable upon a soberer account, that they who design Marriage, should give themselves the advantage of decent ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeness of their dress belie Nature, and render themselves less amiable than she has made them. But all this being granted, 'twill by no means justify that excessive curiosity and sollicitude, that expence of time and money too which is now used. A very moderate degree of all those will serve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproach of an affected Singularity, which is as much as a
sober

sober person need take care for. And I must take leave to say, that in order to Marriage, such a moderation is much likelier to succeed, than the contrary extravagance. Among the pruder sort of Men I am sure it is, if it be not among the loose and vain, against which 'twill be their guard, and so do them the greater service. For certainly, he that chuses a wife for those qualities for which a wise Man would refuse her, understands so little what Marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that shall have him. But if they desire to marry Men of sobriety and discretion, they are obliged in justice to bring the same qualities they expect, which will be very ill evinced by that excess and vanity we now speak of.

14. FOR to speak a plain (though perhaps ungrateful) truth, this (together with some of the modish liberties now in use) is it, which keeps so many young Ladies about the Town unmarried 'till they lose the epithet of young. Sober men are afraid to venture upon a humour so disagreeing to their own, least whilst (according to the primitive reason of Marriage) they seek an help, they espouse a ruin. But this is especially dreadful to a plain Country-gentleman, who looks upon one of these fine Women as a gaudy idol, to whom if he once become a votary, he must sacrifice a great part of his fortune, and all his content.

How

How reasonable that apprehension is, the many wracks of considerable Families do too evidently attest. But I presume some of the nicer Ladies have such a contempt of any thing that they please to call rustick, that they will not much regret the averting of those whom they so despise. They will not perhaps, while they are in pursuit or hopes of others: but when those fail, these will be look'd on as a welcome reserve: and therefore 'twill be no prudence to cut themselves off from that last resort, lest they (as many have done) betake themselves to much worse. For as in many instances, 'tis the Country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the Town: so of all commerces there, Marriage would soonest fail, if all rural supplies were cut off.

15. BUT I have pursu'd this speculation farther than perhaps my Virgin-readers will thank me for: I shall return to that which it was brought to enforce, and beseech them, that if not to Men, yet to approve themselves to God, they will confine themselves in the matter of their dress, within the due limits of decency and sobriety. I shall not direct them to those strict rules which *Tertullian* and some others of the ancient Fathers have prescrib'd in this matter; my petition is only, that our Virgins would at least so take care of their Bodies, as persons that also have a Soul: which if they can be perswaded to,

Y

they

they may reserve much of their time for more worthy uses, than those of the Comb, the Toilet, and the Glass. And truly, 'tis not a little their concern to do so: for this Spring of their Age is that critical instant, that must either confirm or blast the Hopes of all the succeeding Seasons. The Minds of young people are usually compar'd to a blank sheet of Paper, equally capable of the best or the worst Impressions: 'tis pity they should be fill'd with childish Scrawls, and little insignificant Figures; but 'tis shame and horror they should be stain'd with any vicious Characters, any Blots of Impurity or Dishonour. To prevent which, let the severest notions of Modesty and Honour be early and deeply impress'd upon their Souls, graven as with the point of a Diamond, that they may be as indeleble as they are indispensably necessary to the Virgin-state.

16. THERE is also another very requisite quality, and that is Obedience. The younger sort of Virgins are suppos'd to have Parents; or if any have been so unhappy as to lose them early, they commonly are left in the charge of some Friend or Guardian, that is to supply the place: so that they cannot be to seek to whom this Obedience is to be paid. And it is not more their Duty than their interest to pay it. Youth is apt to be foolish in it's designs, and heady in the pursuit of them, and
there

there can be nothing more deplorable, than to have it left to it's self. And therefore God, who permits not even the Brutes to destitute their young ones, 'till they attain to the perfection of their kind, has put children under the guidance and protection of their Parents, 'till by the maturing of their judgements they are qualify'd to be their own Conductors. Now this Obedience (as that which is due to all other Superiors) is to extend it-self to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clause of exception, but only where the command is unlawful. And in so wide a scene of action, there will occur so many particular occasions of Submission, that they had need have a great Reverence of their Parent's Judgements, and distrust of their own. And if it should happen that some Parents are not qualify'd to give them the former, yet the general imbecility of their Age, will remain a constant ground of the latter: so that they may safer venture themselves to their Parent's Misguidance than their own, by how much the errors of Humility and Obedience are less malignant than those of Presumption and Arrogance.

17. BUT this is a Doctrine which will scarce pass for Orthodox with many of the young Women of our days, with whom 'tis prejudice enough against the prudentest advice, that it comes from their Parents. 'Tis

the grand Ingenuity of these times to turn every thing into Ridicule; and if a Girl can but rally smartly upon the sober admonition of a Parent, she concludes she is the abler person, takes her self for a Wit, and the other for a Fop; (a bug-bear word, devis'd to fright all Seriousness and Sobriety out of the World) and learns not only to disobey, but to contemn. Indeed, the great Confidence that Youth now seems to have of it's self, as it is very indecent, so it is extremely pernicious. Children that will attempt to go alone before their time, often get dangerous Falls: and when those who are but little remov'd from Children, shall cast off the wiser conduct of others, they often sadly miscarry by their own.

18. I know this Age has so great a contempt of the former, that 'tis but matter of scorn to alledge any of their Customs, else I should say, that the Liberties that are taken now, would then have been startled at. They that should then have seen a young Maid rambling abroad without her Mother, or some other prudent person, would have look'd on her as a Stray, and thought it but a Neighbourly office to have brought her home: whereas now 'tis a rarity to see them in any company graver than themselves, and she that go's with her Parent (unless it be such a Parent as is as wild as her self) thinks she do's
but

but walk abroad with her jaylor. But sure there are no small mischiefs that attend this Liberty; for it leaves them perfectly to the choice of their company, a thing of two weighty an importance for giddy heads to determine; who will be sure to elect such as are of their own humour, with whom they may keep up a traffick of little Impertinencies and Trifling entertainments; and so by consequence condemn themselves never to grow wiser, which they might do by an ingenuous Conversation. Nay, 'tis well if that negative Ill be the worst, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill designs upon them. It will be easy getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out, and as easy by little Compliances and flatteries, to insinuate into their good Graces, who have not the Sagacity to discern to what insidious purposes those Blandishments are directed: and when they once begin to nibble at the bait, to be pleas'd with the Courtship, 'tis great odds they do not escape the Hook.

19. ALAS! how many poor innocent Creatures have been thus indiscernably ensnar'd! who have at first, perhaps, only lik'd the Wit and Rallery, perhaps, the Language and Address, then the Freedom and good Humour; 'till at last they come to like the Person. It is therefore a most necessary caution for young Women not to trust too much to their own Conduct, but to own their dependance on those, to whom

whom God and Nature have subjected them, and to look on it not as their restraint and burden, but as their shelter and protection. For where once the Authority of a Parent comes to be despis'd, tho' in the lightest instance, it lays the Foundation of the utmost Disobedience. She that will not be prescrib'd to in the choice of her ordinary diverting Company, will less be so in choosing the fix'd Companion of her Life; and we find it often eventually true, that those who govern themselves in the former, will not be govern'd by their Friends in the latter; but by Pre-engagements of their own, prevent their elections for them.

20. AND this is one of the highest injuries they can do their Parents, who have such a native right in them, that 'tis no less an Injustice than Disobedience to dispose of themselves without them. This right of the Parent is so undoubted, that we find God himself gives away to it, and will not suffer the most holy pretence, no not that of a Vow, to invade it, as we may see his own stating of the case, *Numb.* 30. How will he then resent it, to have this so indispensable a Law violated, upon the impulse of an impotent Passion, an amorous Inclination? Nor is the Folly less than the Sin: they injure and afflict their Parents, but they generally ruin and undo themselves: and that upon a double account. First as to the secular part; Those
that

that are so rash as to make such Matches, cannot be imagin'd so provident, as to examine how agreeable 'tis to their interest, or to contrive for any thing beyond the Marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal conditions (like those of the eternal) can find no room amidst their foolish Raptures; but as if Love were indeed that Deity which the Poets feign'd, they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And the event do's commonly too soon instruct them in the deceitfulness of that trust; Love being so unable to support them, that it cannot maintain it's self; but quickly expires when it has brought the Lovers into those straits, from whence it cannot rescue them. So that indeed it do's but play the decoy with them, brings them into the noose and then retires. For when secular Wants begin to pinch them, all the transports of their kindness do usually convert into mutual accusations for having made each other miserable.

21. AND indeed there is no reason to expect any better event, because in the second place, they forfeit their title to the Divine Blessing; nay, they put themselves out of the capacity to ask it, it being a ridiculous impudence to beg of God to prosper the transgressions of his Law. Such Weddings seem only to invoke some of the Poetick Romantick Deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a Happiness as fictitious as are the Gods
that

that are to send it. Let all Virgins therefore Religiously observe this part of Obedience to their Parents, that they may not only have Their Benediction, but God's. And to that purpose let this be laid as a fundamental Rule; that they never hearken to any proposal of Marriage made them from any other hand; but when any such Overture is made, divert the address from themselves, and direct it to their Parents, which will be the best test imaginable for any Pretender. For if he know himself worthy of them, he will not fear to avow his design to these, and therefore if he decline that, 'tis a certain symptom, he is conscious of something he knows will not give a valuable consideration; so that this course will repell no Suitor, but such as it is their interest not to admit. Besides, 'tis most agreeable to the Virgin Modesty, which should make Marriage an Act, rather of their Obedience, than their Choice; and they that think their Friends too slow-pac'd in the matter, and seek to out-run them, give cause to suspect they are spurr'd on by somewhat too warm desires.

22. BUT as a Daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the Will of her Parent, so (to hang the balance even) I must say she is not oblig'd to force her own, by Marrying where she cannot love; for a negative voice in the case is sure as much the Child's right, as the Parent's. It is true, she ought well to examine the
the

the grounds of her aversion, and if they prove only Childish and Fanciful, should endeavour to correct them by Reason and sober Consideration; but if after all she cannot leave to hate, I think she should not proceed to Marry. I confess I see not how she can, without a sacrilegious Hypocrisy, vow so solemnly to love where she at that instant actually abhors: and where the Marry'd state is begun with such a Perjury, 'tis no wonder to find it continu'd on at the same rate, that other parts of the Vow be also violated: and that she observe the Negative part no more than the Positive, and as little forsake others, as she do's heartily cleave to her Husband. I fear this is a consequence whereof there are too many sad instances now extant; for tho' doubtless there are some Virtues which will hold out against all the Temptations their aversions can give, nay, which do at last even conquer those aversions, and render their Duty as easy as they have kept it safe; yet we find there are but some few that do so; that it is no inseparable property of the Sex, and therefore it is sure too hazardous an experiment for any of them to venture on.

23. AND if they may not upon the more generous motive of Obedience, much less may they upon the worse inducements of Avarice and Ambition: for a Woman to make a Vow to the Man, and yet intend only to Marry his Fortune or his Title, is the basest insincerity,

and such as in any other kind of civil contracts would not only have the infamy, but the punishment of a Cheat. Nor will it at all secure them, that in this 'tis only lyable to God's Tribunal: for that is not like to make the doom less, but more heavy, it being, as the Apostle witnesses, *a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God; Hebr. 10. 31.* In a word, Marriage is God's Ordinance, and should be consider'd as such; not made a stale to any unworthy design. And it may well be presum'd one cause why so few Matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right Foundation. Some are groundd upon Wealth, some on Beauty, too sandy bottoms, God knows, to raise any lasting felicity on: whilst in the interim, Virtue and Piety, the only solid Basis for that Superstructure, are scarce ever consider'd. Thus God is commonly left out of the consultation. The Lawyers are resorted to, to secure the Settlements, all sorts of Artificers, to make up the Equipage; but he is neither advis'd with as to the motives, nor scarce supplicated as to the event of Wedding. Indeed, 'tis a deplorable sight to see with what lightness and unconcernedness young People go to that weightiest action of their Lives; that a Marriage-day is but a kind of a Bacchanal, a more licens'd avow'd Revel: when, if they duly consider'd it, 'tis the Hinge upon which their future Life moves, which turns them over to a Happy or Miserable


Miserable being; and therefore ought to be enter'd upon with the greatest Seriousness and Devotion. Our Church advises excellently in the preface to Matrimony: and I wish they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their study a good while before: yea, and their Marriage-vow too; which is so strict and awful a bond, that, methinks, they had need well weigh every branch of it, e're they enter into it; and by the ferventest Prayers implore that God, who is the witness, to be their assistant too in it's performance.





SECT. II.

Of Wives.

I.  AND now having conducted the Virgin to the entrance of another State, I must shift the Scene, and attend her thither also. And there she is launch'd into a wide Sea, that one relation of a Wife drawing after it many others: for as she espouses the Man, so she do's his Obligations also: and where-ever He by ties of Nature or Alliance, owes a Reverence or Kindness, she is no less a debtor. Her Marriage is an adoption into his Family, and therefore she is to pay to every branch of it what their Stations there do respectively require. To define which more particularly, would be a work of more length than profit. I shall therefore confine the present consideration to the relation she stands in to her Husband,

band, (and what is usually con-comitant with that) her Children and her Servants, and so shall consider her in the three capacities of a Wife, a Mother, and a Mistress.

2. IN that of a Wife her duty has several aspects, as it relates, first to his Person, secondly to his Reputation, thirdly to his Fortune. The first debt to his Person is Love, which we find set as the prime Article in the Marriage-vow. And indeed this is the most essential requisite; without this 'tis only a Bargain and Compact, a Tyranny perhaps on the Man's part, and a Slavery on the Woman's. 'Tis Love only that cements the hearts, and where that Union is wanting, 'tis but a shadow, a carcass of Marriage. Therefore as it is very necessary to bring some degree of that to this state; so 'tis no less to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of Marriage; makes the Yoke fit so lightly, that it rather pleases than galls. It should therefore be the study of Wives to preserve this flame; that, like the *Vestal* Fire, it may never go out: and to that end carefully to guard it from all those things which are naturally apt to extinguish it; of which kind are all Frowardness and little Perverseness of Humour, all Sullen and Morose Behaviour, which by taking off from the Delight and Complacency of conversation, will by degrees wear off the Kindness.

3. BUT

3. BUT of all I know nothing more dangerous than that unhappy passion of Jealousy, which tho' 'tis said to be the Child of Love, yet like the Viper, it's Birth is the certain destruction of the Parent. As therefore they must be nicely careful to give their Husbands no colour, nor the least umbrage for it; so should they be as resolute to resist all that occurs to themselves, be so far from that busy Curiosity, that Industry to find causes of Suspicion, that even where they present themselves they should avert the consideration, and put the most candid construction upon any doubtful action. And indeed Charity in this instance hath not more of the Dove than of the Serpent. It is infinitely the wisest course, both in relation to her present Quiet, and her future Innocence. The entertaining a jealous Fancy, is the admitting the most treacherous, the most disturbing In-mate in the World; and she opens her breast to a Fury that lets it in. 'Tis certainly one of the most enchanting Frenzies imaginable, keeps her always in a most restless importunate search after that which she dreads and abhors to find, and makes her equally miserable when she is injur'd, and when she is not.

4. AND as she totally loses her Ease, so 'tis odds but she will part also with some degrees of her Innocence. Jealousy is commonly attended with a black train: it musters all the Forces of our irascible part to abet it's quarrel,

quarrel, Wrath and Anger, Malice and Revenge: and by how much the Female impotence to govern those passions is the greater, so much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will so surely set them in an uprore. For if *Jealousy* be, as the Wife Man says, *the rage of a Man*, *Prov. 6 34.* we may well think it may be the Fury, the Madness of a Woman. And indeed all Ages have given Tragical instances of it, not only in the most indecent Fierceness and Clamour, but in the solemn mischiefs of actual Revenges. Nay, 'tis to be doubted there have been some whose Malice has rebounded; who have ruin'd themselves in spite, have been Adulterous by way of Retaliation, and taken more scandalous liberties than those they complain'd of in their Husbands. And when such Enormous effects as these are the issues of Jealousy, it ought to keep a Woman on the strictest guard against it.

5. BUT perhaps it may be said, that some are not left to their Jealousy and Conjectures, but have more demonstrative proofs. In this Age 'tis indeed no strange thing for Men to publish their sin as *Sodom*, and the Offender do's sometimes not only discover, but boast his crime. In this case I confess 'twill be scarce possible to dis-believe him: but even here a Wife has this advantage, that she is out of the pain of suspense. She knows the utmost, and therefore

fore is at leisure to convert all that industry, which she would have us'd for the discovery, to fortify her self against a known Calamity, which sure she may as well do in this as in any other; a patient Submission being the only Catholicon in all distresses, and as the flightest can overwhelm us, if we add our own Impatience towards our sinking, so the greatest cannot, if we deny it that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who, in case of this injury, pursue their Husbands with Virulencies and Reproaches. This is, as *Solomon* says, *Prov. 25. 20. The pouring vinegar upon nitre*, applying Corrosives when Balsams are most needed, whereby they not only encrease their own smart, but render the wound incurable. They are not Thunders and Earth-quakes, but soft gentle Rains that close the Scissures of the Ground; and the breaches of Wedlock will never be cemented by Storms and loud Out-cries. Many Men have been made worse, but scarce ever any better by it: for guilt covets nothing more than an opportunity of Recriminating; and where the Husband can accuse the Wife's Bitterness, he thinks he needs no other Apology for his own Lust.

6. A wise Diffimulation, or very calm Notice, is sure the likeliest means of reclaiming: for where Men have not wholly put off Humanity, there is a native Compassion to a meek Sufferer. We have naturally some regret to see

see a Lamb under the Knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a Swine diverts our pity: so that patience in this case is as much the interest as duty of a Wife.

7. BUT there is another instance wherein that Virtue has yet a severer tryal, and that is when a Wife lyes under the causeless Jealousies of the Husband, (I say causeless, for if they be just, 'tis not so much a season for Patience, as for Repentance and Reformation.) This is sure one of the greatest calamities that can befall a Virtuous Woman; who as she accounts nothing so dear as her Loyalty and Honour, so thinks no infelicity can equal the aspersions of those, especially when it is from him, to whom she has been the most solicitous to approve herself. Yet God, who permits nothing but what he directs to some wise and gracious end, has an over-ruling hand in this, as well as in all other events of Life; and therefore it becomes every Woman in that condition, to examine strictly what she has done to provoke so severe a Scourge. For tho' her heart condemn her not of any falseness to her Husband, yet probably it may of many disloyalties to her God; and then she is humbly to accept even of this traducing of her Innocence, as the punishment of her Iniquity, and bear it with the same temper wherewith *David* did the unjust Reviling of *Shimei*, 2 Sam. 16. 11. *Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

A a

8. AND

8. AND when she has made this penitent reflection on her real guilts, she may then with more courage encounter those imaginary ones which are charg'd on her: wherein she is to use all prudent and regular means for her justification, that being a debt she owes to truth, and her own Fame. But if after all, the suspicion remains still fix'd (as commonly those which are the most unreasonable are the most obstinate) she may still solace her self in her integrity, and God's approbation of it: nor ought she to think her self desolate, that has her appeal open to Heaven. Therefore whilst she can look both inward and upward with comfort, why should she choose to fix her eyes only on the object of her grief? and whilst her own complaint is of Defamation, why should she so dishonour God and a good Conscience, as to shew any thing can be more forcible to oppress, than they are to relieve and support? And if she may not indulge to Grief, much less may she to Anger and Bitterness.

9. INDEED, if she consider how painful a passion Jealousy is, her Husband will more need her Pity, who tho' he be unjust to her, is yet cruel to himself. And as we do not use to hate and malign those Lunaticks, who in their fits beat their Friends and cut and gash themselves; but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; so should the

the Wife not despitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wisely contrive to avert his temptations to more, by denying her self even the most innocent liberties, if she see they dissatisfy him. I know there have been some of another opinion; and, as if they thought Jealousy were to be cur'd by majoration, have in an angry contempt done things to inflame it, put on an unwonted Freedom and Jollity, to shew their Husbands how little they had secur'd themselves by their distrust. But this as it is no Christian, so I conceive it is no prudent expedient: it serves to strengthen, not only the Husband's suspicion, but his party too, and makes many others of his mind: and 'tis a little to be fear'd, that by using so to brave the Jealousy, they may at last come to verify it. I have been the longer on this theme, because as Jealousy is the most fatal Pest of a marry'd Life, so I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of Quality, and with the worst and most durable effects. Yet what-ever pretences people may take hence, the Marriage-Vow is too fast a knot to be loosen'd by Fancies and Chimera's: let the Woman therefore be the person suspecting or suspected, neither will absolve her from that Love to her Husband she has sworn to pay.

10. BUT alas! what hope is there that these greater temptations shall be resisted, when we see every the slightest disgust is now a-days

too strong for the Matrimonial Love. Nay indeed, it do's of course fall off of it's self; which is an event so much expected, that 'tis no wonder to see it expire with the first circuit of the Moon; but it is every body's admiration to see it last one of the Sun. And sometimes it vanishes so clearly, as not to leave so much as a shadow behind it, not so much as the formalities of Marriage: one Bed, one House cannot hold them: as if they had been put together like Case-shot in a Gun, only that they might the more forcibly scatter several ways. Nay, as if this were design'd and intended in the first addressess unto Marriage, a separate maintenance is of course afore-hand contracted for, and becomes as solemn a part of the Settlement, as the Joynture is. *Plutarch* observes of the ancient *Romans*, that for 230 years after the founding of their State, there never was one example of any marry'd couple that separated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of Marriage than ours is, the difference must lie between their Veracity and our Falseness.

II. BUT even amongst those who desert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that Entireness and Affection which is the Soul of Marriage; and to help on the declination, there are fashionable Maxims taken up, to make Men and their Wives the greatest strangers to each other. Thus 'tis pronounc'd
a piece

a piece of ill Breeding, a sign of a Country Gentleman, to see a Man go abroad with his own Wife, (I suppose those who brought up these rules, are not to seek what use to make of them.) And were the time of most of the modish Couples computed, 'twould be found they are but few of their waking hours (I might say minutes) together: so that if nothing else, mere desuetude and intermission of conversation must needs allay, if not quite extinguish their Kindness. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the authority of a Fashion greater than that of a Vow: and such will still think it their duty both to own and cherish their Kindness and Affection they have so solemnly promis'd.

12. ANOTHER debt to the person of a Husband, is Fidelity: for as she has espous'd all his interests, so she is oblig'd to be true to them, to keep all his secrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea, and in a mild and gentle manner to admonish him of his faults. This is the most genuine act of Friendship; therefore she who is plac'd in the nearest and most intimate degree of that relation, must not be wanting in it. She that lies in his bosom should be a kind of second Conscience to him, by putting him in mind both of his Duty and his Aberration: and as long as she can be but patiently heard, 'tis her sin to omit it; 'tis the greatest treachery to his noblest, to his Immortal

tal Part, and such as the most officious cares of his other interests can never expiate. Nay indeed, she is unfaithful to her self in it, there being nothing that do's so much secure the happiness of a Wife, as the Virtue and Piety of her Husband. Yet, tho' this is to have her chiefest care, as being his principal interest, she is to neglect none of the inferiour, but contribute her utmost to his advantage in all his concerns.

13. BEYOND all these the Matrimonial Fidelity has a special notion as it relates to the Bed; and in that the Wife is to be most severely scrupulous, and never to admit so much as a thought or imagination, much less any parly or treaty contrary to her Loyalty. 'Tis true, Wantonness is one of the foulest blots that can stain any of the Sex; but 'tis infinitely more odious in the Marry'd, it being in them an accumulation of crimes, Perjury added to Uncleaness, the infamy of their Family superstructed upon their own. And accordingly all Laws have made a difference in their punishments. Adultery was by God's own award punish'd with Death among the Jews, *Levit.* 20. 10. And it seems it was so agreeable to natural justice, that divers other Nations did the like; and I know no reason, but the difficulty of detection, that should any where give it a milder sentence. The Son of *Sirach* has excellently describ'd the several gradations

tions of the guilt, *Ecclus.* 23. 23. which I shall desire the Reader to consult; which who so do's, must certainly wonder at the Alchymy of this Age, that from such a mass of shame and infamy can extract matter of confidence: that those who lie under so many brands and stigma's, are so far from hiding their faces, that none shew them with so much boldness, and the assurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a slender shelter for guilt, and serves rather to betray than hide: so that they are not able to outface the opinions of Men, much less can they the judgements of God; who as he was solemnly invoc'd as a Witness to their Vow, so by his Omnipresence is against their wills a Witness too of it's violations.

14. ANOTHER duty to the person of the Husband is Obedience, a word of a very harsh sound in the ears of some Wives, but is certainly the duty of all: and that not only by their promise of it; tho' that were sufficient; but from an Original of much older date, it being the mulct that was laid upon the first Woman's disobedience to God, that she (and all deriv'd from her) should be subject to the Husband; so that the contending for superiority is an attempt to reverse that fundamental Law, which is almost as ancient as the World. But surely God, with whom there is no shadow of change, will not make
acts

acts of repeal to satisfy the Petulancy of a few masterless Women. That Statute will still stand in force, and if it cannot awe them into an observance, will not fail to consign them to punishment. And indeed this fault is commonly it's own lictor, and do's anticipate (tho' not avert) it's final doom. The imperiousness of a Woman do's often raise those storms, wherein her self is ship-wrack'd. How pleasantly might many Women have liv'd, if they had not affected Dominion? Nay, how much of their Will might they have had, if they had not struggled for it? For let a man be of never so gentle a temper, (unless his Head be softer than his Heart) such an usurpation will awaken him to assert his right. But if he be of a sour severe nature, if he have as great a desire of Rule as she, back'd with a much better Title, what Tempests, what Hurricanes must two such opposite Winds produce? And at last 'tis commonly the Wife's lot, after an uncreditable unjust War, to make as disadvantageous a Peace; this (like all other ineffective Rebellions) serving to straiten her Yoke, to turn an ingenuous Subjection into a slavish Servitude: so that certainly it is not only the Vertue, but the Wisdom of Wives, to do that upon duty which at last they must (with more unsupportable circumstances) do upon necessity.

15. AND as they owe these Severals to the person

person of the Husband, so there is also a debt to his Reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it, by making all that is good in him as conspicuous, as publick as they can; setting his worth in the clearest light, but putting his infirmities in the shade; casting a Veil upon those to skreen them from the eyes of others, nay, (as far as is possible) from their own too; there being nothing acquir'd to the Wife by contemplating the Husband's weakness, but a temptation of despising him; which tho' bad enough in it's self, is yet render'd worse by that train of mischievous consequences which usually attend it. In case therefore of any notable imperfections in him, her safest way will be to consider them no farther than she can be instrumental to the curing of them: but to divert from those, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps, if impartially weigh'd, may balance, if not overpoise his. And indeed those Wives who are apt to blaze their Husband's faults, do shew that they have either little adverted to their own, or else find them so great, that they are forc'd to that art of Diversion, that seek in his infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unluckly, for nothing do's in sober Judges create greater prejudice to a Woman, than to see her forward in impeaching her Husband.

16. BUT besides this immediate tenderness

B b

of

of his Reputation, there is another by way of Reflection, which consists in a care that she her self do nothing which may redound to his Dishonour. There is so strict an union between a Man and his Wife, that the Law counts them one person, and consequently they can have no divided interest: so that the mis-behaviour of the Woman reflects ignominiously on the Man; it therefore concerns them, as well upon their Husband's as their own account, to abstain even from all appearance of Evil, and provide that themselves be (what *Cæsar* is said to have requir'd of his Wife) not only without Guilt, but without Scandal also.

17. ANOTHER part of the Wife's duty relates to her Husband's Fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the Wife's Province: but where the Husband thinks fit to make it so, she is oblig'd to administer it with her best care and industry; not by any neglect of her's, to give others opportunity of defrauding him: yet on the other side, not by an immoderate Tenacity or Gripping, to bring upon him and her self the Reproach, and which is worse, the Curse that attends Exaction and Oppression. But this is not usually the Wife's field of action, tho' he that shall consider the description which *Solomon* gives of a Vertuous Wife, *Proverb.* 31. will be apt to think her Province is not so narrow and
 confin'd,

confin'd, as the humour of the Age would represent it. He tells us, *That she seeks wool and flax, and works diligently with her hands: that she is like the Merchant's ships, and brings her food from far. That she considers a field, and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard, &c.* And lest this should be imagin'd to be the character of a mean Country Dame, he adds, that *her household is cloth'd with scarlet, and that her husband sits among the elders of the land.* It were easy to give instances from History, of the advantageous menage and active industry of Wives, not only in single persons, but in whole Nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, than that among the Romans, in the very height and flourish of the Empire. *Augustus himself scarce wore any thing but of the manufacture of his wife, his sister, daughter, and neeces, as Suetonius assures us.* Should the gay lillies of our fields, which neither sow nor spin, nor gather into barns, be exempted from furnishing others, and left to cloath themselves, 'tis to be doubted they would reverse our Saviour's parallel of *Solomon's glories*, and no beggar in all his rags would be array'd like one of these, *Luke 12. 27.*

18. BUT we will be yet more kind, and impose only negative thrift on the Wife, not to waste and embezzle her Husband's Estate, but to confine her expences within such limits as That can easily admit: a caution,

which if all Women had observ'd, many noble Families had been preserv'd, of which there now remains no other memorial, but that they fell a Sacrifice to the profuse vanity of a Woman; and I fear this Age is like to provide many more such Monuments for the next. Our Ladies, as if they emulated the Roman Luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* describe with so much indignation) do sometimes waste about them the revenues of a rich Family; and those that cannot reach to that, shew how much 'tis against their wills they fall lower, by the vast variety and excess of such things as they can possibly compass; so much extravagance, not only in their own dress, but that of their houses and apartments, as if their vanity, like the Leprosy we read of, *Lev. 14. 37.* had infected the very walls. And indeed, 'tis a very spreading fretting one, for the Furniture oft consumes the House, and the House consumes the Land: so that if some Gentlemen were to calculate their Estates, they might reduce all to the Inventory of *Scopias* the *Thessalian*, who profess'd his *All* lay only in such toys as did him no good. Women are now skilful Chymists, and can quickly turn their Husbands Earth into Gold: but they pursue the experiment too far, make that Gold too volatile, and let it all vapour away in insignificant (tho' gaudy) trifles.

19. NOR is it ever like to be otherwise with those that immoderately affect the Town, that Forge of Vanity, which supplies a perpetual spring of new temptations. 'Tis true, there are some Ladies who are necessarily engag'd to be there: their Husband's employments or fortunes have mark'd that out as their proper station, and where the ground of their stay is their duty, there is more reason to hope it will not betray them to ill; for temptations are most apt to assault stragglers, those that put themselves out of their proper road. And truly I see not who can more properly be said to be so than those Women whose means of subsistence lies in the Country, and yet will spend it no where but at *London*: which seems to carry something of opposition to God's Providence; who surely never caus'd their Lot to fall, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *in a fair ground, in goodly heritages, Psal. 16.* with an intent they should never inhabit them. The twelve tribes of *Israel* had their peculiar portions in *Canaan* assign'd them by lot, *Jos. 14. 2.* and every one acquiesc'd in his part, dwelt in his own Inheritance. Had they been impatient of living any where but in the Metropolis, had they all croud-ed to *Jerusalem*, all the rest of the Land would have been as desolate before the Captivity as it was after, none would have been left but such as *Nebuzaradan* permitted to stay, *Jer. 52, 16.* *some of the poor to dress the vines, and to till the ground.*

ground. And truly, the same is like to be the fate of this Nation, if this humour go's on as it has begun; which may in time prove as mischievous to the publick, as it daily is to private Families.

20. BUT besides this, 'tis yet farther to be consider'd, that where God gives an Estate, he, as supreme Landlord, affixes something of duty, lays a kind of rent charge upon it, expects it should maintain both Hospitality and Charity; and sure both these are fittest to be done upon the place whence the ability of them rises. All publick Taxes use to be levy'd where the Estate lyes: and I know not why these which are God's Assessments upon it, should not be paid there too. When a Gentleman's Land becomes profitable unto him by the sweat and labour of his poor Neighbours and Tenants, 'twill be a kind of *muzzling the ox*, 1 Cor. 9. 9. if they never taste of the fruit of their pains, if they shall never have the refreshments of a good Meal, or an Alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be sent up to maintain an Equipage, and keep up a Parade in Town. But alas! 'tis often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the Crop, but the Soil too: those Luxuries usually prey upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an Estate, and many have stay'd in the Town, 'till they have nothing left in the Country to retire to.

21. NOW

21. NOW where this proceeds from the Wife, what account can she give to her Husband, whose Easiness and Indulgence (for that must be suppos'd in the case) she has so abus'd; as also to her Posterity and Family, who for her Pride must be brought low, reduc'd to a condition beneath her Quality, because she affected to live above it? But she will yet worse answer it to her self, on whom she has brought not only the inconvenience, but the guilt. 'Tis sure a lofty mind will feel smart enough of a fall; a diminution, much more an indigence will be sufficiently grievous to a vain and lavish humour; yet here it will farther have an additional sting from the Conscience, that she owes it only to her own Pride and Folly, a most embittering consideration, and such as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty; as much as the pain of an envenom'd Arrow exceeds that of another.

22. BUT the saddest reckoning of all is that which she is to make to God, who has declar'd he hates Robbery, tho' for a Burnt-offering to himself. How will he then detest this Robbery, this impoverishing of the Husband, when 'tis only to make an oblation to Vanity and Excess? It should therefore be the care of all Wives to keep themselves from a guilt for which God and Man, yea and themselves also shall equally accuse them, and to keep their expenses within such limits, that as bees suck, but
do

do not violate or deface the flowers, so they as joint proprietaries with the Husbands, may enjoy, but not devour and destroy his fortune.

23. I have now run through the duties to be perform'd unto the Husbands, wherein I have not us'd the Exactness of a Casuist, in curiously anatomizing every part, and shewing all the most minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and insisted on those wherein Wives are most frequently deficient. I shall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the Husband, is equally so, be he good or ill. The Apostle commands Subjection and Fidelity even to an heathen Husband, 1 *Pet.* 3. 12. and 'tis not now their defect either in Piety or Morality, that can absolve the Wife. For, besides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious, and lyable to be subtracted upon every pretence of demerit, she has by solemn contract renounc'd that liberty, and in their Marriage-vow taken him for better for worse; and it is too late *after vows to make enquiry, Proverbs* 20. 25. to seek to break loose from the bond of her Soul; and how uneasy soever the perverseness of the Husband may render it, he cannot thereby make it less, but more rewardable by God. For what the Apostle speaks in the case of Servants, is no less applyable to this, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. for *this is thank-worthy, if for conscience towards God ye endure grief, suffering wrongfully.* What-ever duty is per-

perform'd to Man with aspect on God, he owns it as to himself; so that how unworthy soever the Husband may be, the Wife cannot mis-place her observance, whilst she finally terminates it on that infinite goodness and Majesty, to whom no Love or Obedience can be enough.

24. FROM this relation of a Wife, there ordinarily springs another, that of a Mother; to which there belongs a distinct duty, which may be branch'd into many severals: but I shall at present only reduce them to two heads, Love and Care. A Mother is a title of so much tenderness, that we find it borrow'd by our common dialect to express the most exuberant kindness; nay, even in Sacred Style it has the same use, and is often set as the highest example our weakness can comprehend of the Divine Compassions. So that nature seems sufficiently to have secur'd the Love of Mothers to their Children, without the aid of any positive Law. Yet we find this (as other instincts of Nature) is sometimes violated, and oftner perverted and apply'd to mistaken purposes: the first is by a defect of love; the other, by an imprudent excess of it: the defect do's, I presume, more rarely occur than the other; yet it doth sometimes happen, and that either from a morose sowerness of humour, or else from too vehement an intention on something else.

25. SOME Women have such a ruggedness of nature, that they can love nothing. The ugly Passions of Anger and Envy have, like *Pharaoh's* lean kine, eat up the more amiable of Love and Joy. *Plato* was wont to advise crabbed austere tempers to sacrifice to the *Graces*; and such as these had need of a great deal of Christian Philosophy, to allay and sweeten their native bitterness. But there are others that are not void of the affection of Love, but 'tis fore-stall'd by some other object, and so diverted from their Children. And 'tis little to be doubted, that those objects which so divert, are none of the best. For the Wisdom of God has dispos'd all duty into such an harmony and consent of Parts, that one interferes not with another. If we love no prohibited thing, all the regular objects of our kindness will agree well enough, and one need never supplant another. And indeed 'tis oft observable, that those Women who immoderately love their own Pleasures, do less regard their Children; they look on them as clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adverting to them will hinder their free range abroad; those are turn'd off to the care of a Nurse or Maid, whilst, perhaps a Dog or Monkey is thought worthy their own attendance.

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a sarcasm of *Caesar's* to some Forreigners, whom he saw (at *Rome*) strangely fond of such little Animals, that

that he ask'd them, whether the Women in their Country had no Children; thereby intimating, how unreasonable it was for those that had, to bestow their Careffes on such Creatures. And surely he would not have given a milder reprimand to some of our Ladies, who not only please, but pride themselves in those little Brutes, shew them to all comers, when perhaps you may converse with them divers days, before you shall, by any mention of theirs, know that they have a Child.

27. To the defect of Love, many are apt to impute the Mother's transferring the nursing her Child to another. I am not forward to pronounce of it, being loth to involve so many as I then must in the imputation of unnaturalness; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of state and greatness; for no other motive, but what is founded in their Quality, could so universally prevail with all that are of it. But sure this is one of the vain Punctilio's wherewith this Age abounds. For what-ever rank the Mother is of, the Child carries proportion to it, and there is the same equality between the greatest Lady and her own Child, as is between the meanest Beggar and her's: tho' indeed if there were any condescension in it, the averfions of that ought not to out-weigh the impulses of Nature, and the many advantages the Child may receive by taking it's Nourishment whence it deriv'd it's Substance. And

therefore, tho' I will not be too positive in asserting the necessity, yet I confess, I cannot but look with reverence on those few Persons of Honour, who have broke through an unreasonable custom, and preferr'd the good of their Children before that fantastick privilege of Greatness. And such must in all Justice be acknowledg'd to have given a much better evidence of their Love to their Children than the other.

28. THERE is in *A. Gellius*, in his fourteenth Book, so fine a Discourse on this subject, where *Favorinus* the Philosopher is introduc'd, perswading a noble Lady, notwithstanding the usual excuses, to nurse her Child: that nothing besides the length, could tempt me to omit the transcribing it: unless happily the little success, which a noble Person of the same Sex here concern'd, I mean the Countess of *Lincoln*, in the ingenuous Book wrote by her, and call'd her *Nursery*, be a sufficient ground of despairing to convince by any thing that can be said. However, let these delicate ones consider the severe words of the Prophet, *Lament. 4. 3. The sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel like the ostrich in the Wilderness, who is harden'd against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labour is in vain without fear; because God hath depriv'd her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding, Job 39. 16, 17.*

29. BUT

29. BUT as there may be a fault in the defect, so there may be also in the excess of Love. God is the only unlimited object of our love, towards all other 'tis easy to become inordinate, and in no instance more than in this of Children. The Love of a Parent is descending, and all things move most violently downwards: so that whereas that of Children to their Parents commonly needs a spur, this of the Parent often needs a bridle; especially that of the Mother, which (by strength of Feminine Passion) do's usually exceed the Love of the Father. Now to regulate this Affection, she is to advert to these two Rules, first that she hurt not her self by it, and secondly that she hurt not her Children. Of the first she is in danger if she suffer that human Affection to swell beyond it's banks, so as to come in any competition with the Divine. This is to make an idol of her Child: for every thing is so to us, which rivals the Love of God in our Hearts: and he who owns the title of a Jealous God, may be provok'd as well by our bowing our Souls to a living Image, as the prostration of our Bodies to a dead. Accordingly, we oft see the effects of his Jealousy in this particular. The doting Affection of the Mother, is frequently punish'd with the untimely Death of her Children: or if not with that, 'tis many times with a severer scourge. They live (but as it was foretold to *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 33.) to
grieve

grieve her eyes, and to consume her heart, to be ruinous to themselves, and afflictions to their friends, and to force their unhappy Mothers to that sad exclamation, Luke 23. 29. Blessed are the wombs that never bare.

30. AND as this proves often true, when the dotage is general upon all the Children, so do's it oftener when 'tis more partial and fix'd upon any one: That Darling which she makes the only object of her Joy, usually becomes that of her Sorrow. It is an ordinary infirmity in Parents, to heap all their kindness upon one to the defrauding of the rest, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of Beauty turns the scales, when perhaps many more solid excellencies are the counterpoise. And surely this is not only unjust but irrational in the Parent: for all the peculiarity of favour in a Superior should be dispens'd either by way of Reward, or Encouragement; and neither of those ends can take place, where 'tis only the outward form that is consider'd. For that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing: and the *Psalmist* will tell us, That *'tis God that hath made us, and not we our selves, Psalm 100. 2.* And as little room is there for the other end, that of Encouragement. For as our Saviour tells us, *Matthew 6. None can add a cubit to his stature, nor make one hair white or black.* 'Tis certain themselves cannot really do

do either, tho' by the aid of artificial Hypocrisy they frequently appear to do both. But those are arts which neither deserve nor want Encouragement: the natural Beauty must have it's increase from the same Source it deriv'd it's being. There is therefore no reasonable account to be given, why a Child should be prefer'd for any such exterior excellency.

31. THE only justifiable ground of partiality to Children is their virtue: for to that their own choice concurs, and so may intitle them to a reward; and 'tis also in their power to advance, and so encouragements are not cast away upon them. Nay, the influences of those may extend farther, and provoke a vertuous Emulation in the rest. But then the Mother must so manage it, as to evidence that 'tis no inequality in her own inclination, but merely the force of the other's desert; not the Person, but the Goodness that biasses her; and when Vertue is known to be the only ingratiating Quality, they will at once learn the way to become her's and God's Favourites. And unless it be upon this one design, 'tis a very unsafe thing for a Parent to make any partial discrimination among Children, which is sure to tempt the more neglected both to repine at her, and envy her Darlings. And oftentimes such seeds of rancour have been by that means sow'd in Children, as have been hard to eradicate in their Riper Years. Nor is the Mischief less
which

which she do's to her Fondlings, who, besides that they are expos'd to the malice of the rest, are usually spoil'd by it, made insolent and untractable perhaps their whole lives after: for where the Mother's Affection is unbridled, commonly the Child's will is so too, her Fondness superseding that Discipline and Correction, which should, as the wise Man speaks, *bow down it's neck from it's youth.*

32. AND the like may be said, where the Indulgence is more universal to all the Children, which is in one respect worse than the partial, because it spoils more; not one or two, but all the Brood. The doting love of a Mother blinds her eyes, that she cannot see their faults, manacles her hands, that she cannot chastise them, and so their vices are permitted to grow up with themselves. As their joynts knit and gather strength, so do their ill habits, till at last they are confirm'd into an Obstinacy; so setting them in a perfect opposition to that pattern they should imitate: for as Christ's Child-hood *increas'd in wisdom*, and the Divine Favour, *Luke 2.* so do their's in all those provoking Follies, which may avert both the Love of God and Man. And alas! what recompence can the little blandishments and caresses of a Mother make her Children, for such important, such inestimable mischiefs? So that she that will be really kind, must temper her indulgence with a prudent severity, or
else

else she eminently violates the second rule, by which she should regulate her love, and do's that to her Children, which *Jacob* feared from his Father, *Gen. 27. Brings a curse upon them, and not a blessing.*

33. INDEED the best way of approving their Love, is by well discharging the other branch of their duty, that of Care. Without this, all the most passionate raptures of kindness are but an airy apparition, a phantastick scene, and will no more advantage a Child, than the whole shambles in picture can feed and nourish it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary duty, for some one critical instant; but is to attend the Child through the several stages of it's minority, *viz.* Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. The very first part of their Infancy, is a season only for those cares which concern their bodies, providing for their careful attendance, and all other things conducing to the strengthening their constitutions, and laying a foundation for future health and vigour. Which is their interest not only upon a bodily, but upon an intellectual account, the good temperature of the body being a great aid towards the free operations of the mind. And therefore *Socrates* and other Philosophers, much recommend to their disciples the care of health, as that which freed the Soul from many incumbrances in it's pursuit of knowledge: and it was the comprehensive

D d

prayer

prayer of the Poet, *That the gods would grant a sound mind in a healthful body.*

34. BUT this health is not always the consequent of a very nice and tender breeding, but is very oft overthrown by it; and if Ladies could but find in their hearts to try it, they would, I doubt not, find, that the injuring them to moderate hardships would much more conduce to the establishing and fortifying their constitutions.

35. BEYOND all this, the care for their exterior is soon overtaken by a more important one, that of their interior, in the timing of which there seems to be a very common mistake in the World. We look upon the seven years Infancy, as the life merely of an Animal, to be spent only in the entertainments of sense: and as we use not to yoke Calves, or back young Colts, so we think our Children are for a while to be left at the same liberty, to have no restraint put on any of their passions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach Children to be angry and envious, proud and sullen, as if we feared their natural propensions to all these were too faint, and wanted the help of Institutions. But surely this is a great and pernicious error; and this supposing Children to be so long brutes is the way to make them so longer. The Patrons of Atheism make it a most constant topick in the disparagements of Religion, that it is owed to the

the prejudices infused in the first infancy: 'twere to be wisht, that this objection might so far be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of Vertue, and hatred of Vice, might have the first possession of the Soul; and they be made to moderate their passions, as soon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engaged.

36. AND truly if we will observe it, we may see very early dawnings of reason in infants, which would sooner come to a brightness, if we would betimes set to the scattering of those passions which eclipse and darken it. A Child will quickly be taught to know what pleases or displeases a Parent, and by a very little taste of reward or punishment will learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is done, the Parent has gain'd the fundamental point, that of *obedience*, and may superstruct on it what she pleases, and then 'tis her fault if the Child be not by easie and insensible degrees moulded into a right form. 'Tis at first all one to the Child, whether he name God in an oath or in his prayers; but a Mother by punishing the one, and rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference; and so proportionably in other instances. As to the way of discipline, it may not be amiss to observe; That when there is occasion for severity, it's better to awe by actual punishment than terror, and

never to make use of infinite and invifible affrightments, the beloved methods of Nurfes and Servants; fuch as are the menacing of Sprights and Mormo's, and leaving in the dark, that frequently make dastardly and timorous impreffions, which a long age fcarcely wears off.

37. A fober fenfe of things, is to be impreffed by treatible means; and this will be done with moft eafe both to the Parent and Child, the fooner 'tis fet upon. The will of a tender infant is, like it's limbs, fupple and pliant, but time confirms it, and custom hardens it: fo that 'tis a cruel indulgence to the poor creature, to let it contract fuch habits, which muft coft him fo dear the breaking, and dearer if never broken. And if this early care be taken of the infancy, 'twill much eafe the next part, that of the childhood; for where the Iron finew in the neck is broken, where the native ftubborneff is subdued fo early, the yoke will fit eafy, all fucceeding parts of difcipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this age, is, the inftructing in all parts of ufeul knowledge, of which as the divine, for the excellency both of its nature and its end, muft be firft ranked, fo fhould it be firft and moft induftrioufly cultivated, and by all endearing methods impreffed, not only on the underftanding, but the heart. Piety and Virtue fhould be propos'd to Children as the moft amiable, as well as neceffary things,
and

and they should be invited not only to know but love them.

38. THIS part of learning is equally competent to both Sexes, and therefore when the Sons are removed from under the Mother's tuition, and sent to more publick places of erudition, her province is still the same as to her Daughters, to whom she should not only preach, but exemplify it in her own practise; no precepts penetrating so much into Youth, as those that are so enforced. And in order to this, I should commend to Mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the personal inspection of them; not to turn them off wholly to servants, no nor yet Governesses, but frequently themselves to examine how they proceed in the speculative part of knowledge, and no less frequently exhort them to the practise.

39. *MARCUS CATO* would not let his Son learn of his slave, as disdaining a Child should owe so considerable a benefit to so servile a person; and if he thought the mere teaching of Grammar too great a charge for such a one, surely the whole institution of Youth is a much greater, it being that on which not only a few outward accomplishments, but even their eternity depends. The great *Cornelia* mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the mother of *Augustus*, thought it worth their pains to be Governesses. And the truth is, the Soul of a
Child

Child is a little too precious a trust to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercenary servant. Or if they happen not to want those qualifications, yet 'tis very possible they may prudence, of which there is no small degree requisite to the instructing of Youth, too great a remissness or severity being equally destructive in that Affair. And indeed besides these immediate, there are some other collateral benefits consequent to the Mother's performing that office: 'twill bring her and her Children into an intimacy and conversation, give her an acquaintance with their several capacities and humors; for want of which, many Parents have erred in their conduct, one sort of treatment being not fit for all Children, and the distinguishing that depending wholly on their discerning their particular tempers, which cannot well be done without some converse with them.

40. BESIDES, by this they will be witnesses how they dispose their time, that they neither lose it by doing nothing, nor yet mis-employ it by doing ill. And indeed there is scarce any part of the Parent's care more important than this; idleness being no farther removed from Vice, than a cause is from its immediate effect. Therefore if Children be permitted to trifle away their time, they will soon learn to trifle away their innocence also. So that 'tis highly necessary that they be provided of a succession of employments, that by the
variety

variety they may be insensibly drawn on. Nay, methinks, it might very well be contrived that their Recreations might sometimes consist of such ingenuous exercise, that they may at once both Play and Learn.

41. THERE is yet another good effect of the Mother's presence with the Children, (which perhaps is no less material than any of the former:) tis, that by this associating them with her self, she prevents the danger of worse society. Children, if the Parents allow them not their company, are necessarily cast upon that of Servants, than which there is scarce a greater danger that attends Youth. For besides that low sort of Converse debases their minds, makes them mean and fordid, it often corrupts their manners too; Children usually not receiving more pestilent infusions from any than such. Servants that desire to ingratiate themselves and have no laudable quality whereby to do it, must first endeavour to ingratiate Vice to them; and then by their officious ministries in that, have a ready way of introducing themselves into favour. Perhaps, this will be thought to concern only the Masculine part of Children, and that the Female, who are commonly in a distinct apartment, and converse only with their own Sex, are more secure. But I would not advise Mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no surer, that their Daughters shall not converse with men, nay
men

men of the meaner sort too, than that their Maids and Attendants shall not do so. And when 'tis consider'd, how apt those are to entertain, if not to invite Amours, 'tis not very probable the Rooms where they quarter shall be inaccessible to those they affect. And it were much safer for Children to be in the most publick concourse of men, than to be witnesses and observers of the private intrigues of such lovers. The memories of Youth are very tenacious, and if they once be tainted with any indecent thing, will be apt to recollect it, 'till at last perhaps they come to transcribe it. 'Tis therefore in this respect a very useful part of the Mother's care, to make her self company to her Daughter, to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious Converse.

42. BUT if this be useful in Childhood, 'tis no less than necessary in the next period of their time; when they arrive near the Growth and Age of Women. Then indeed the Mother should not only make them her Companions, but her Friends; allow them such a kind, yet modest Freedom, that they may have a Complacency in her Company, and not be tempted to seek it among their inferiours: that the belief of her Kindness may supplant the pretensions of those meaner Sycophants, who by little Flatteries endeavour to screw themselves into their good Opinion, and become their Confidants: than which there is nothing
more

more mischievous; those private Cabals that are held with such, serving only to render them mutinous against their Parents; these Family-Incendiaries, like those in the State and Church, still inculcating the one grand principle of Liberty: a word so charming to our deprav'd Nature, and especially to Youth, that they should not be trusted with such Lectures. Besides those intimacies are often introductions to worse; many scandalous Amours and unequal Matches having had their rise from them. It should therefore be the business of Mothers to prevent all such pernicious Leagues, by pre-engaging them in more safe Familiarities, either with her self, or some other, of whose Vertue she has reason to be confident.

43. BUT the most infallible security against this and all other mischiefs, is the bringing them into an Intimacy and Conversation with their Maker, by fixing a true sense of Religion in their Hearts; if that can be effectually done 'twill supersede all other expedients. She that duly considers she is always in God's presence, will want no other Inspector, nor will she much need Monitors, who attends to the advices of her own Conscience. Neither will it only tend to the securing her Innocence, but her Reputation too; it being one part of the Christian Law, *to abstain from all appearance of evil*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 22. *to do things that are of good report*, *Phil.* 4. 8.

so that Piety is the one complete Armour to defend both their Vertue and Fame. And 'tis extremely necessary they should be furnish'd with it, at this Age especially, when they do at first enter into the world; which we may well look on as a taking the Field, considering how many assaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this Armature, they may, none knows how soon, be incurably wounded: of which there want not many sad instances, some whereof might probably have been prevented, had the Parent taken care to have better fortify'd them.

44. AND indeed 'tis not a little sad to see how much this their most important concern is neglected. Many Mothers, who are nicely curious in other parts of their Daughters breeding, are utterly inconsiderate of this. They must have all civil accomplishments, but no Christian. Those are excluded out of the Scheme of Education, and by that means lie under the prejudice of being not only unnecessary, but ungentile, below the regard of Persons of Quality. 'Tis much to be fear'd, that this neglect towards their Children, is founded in a previous contempt of Piety in themselves; yet I suppose 'tis often increas'd by a little vanity they have of seeing them excell in some of those exterior qualities, which may recommend them to the humour of the World, upon the improving whereof they are so intent, that
more

more material things are over-look'd. And when those are acquir'd, the Pride of shewing them betrays them to other inconveniences. The Mother oft not only permits, but incites the Daughter to the opportunities of boasting her Excellencies, sends her so oft abroad on that design, that at last perhaps she cannot, when she would, keep her at home, as I believe too many have found experimentally true. In a word, this interval between Child-hood and Majority, is the most critical point of a Woman's Life, and therefore should be the most nicely and warily attended; and a Mother had need summon not only all her care and Diligence, but her Prudence too, well to discharge this part of her Obligation.

45. I shall not insist more minutely upon particulars: I have in the former Section spoken somewhat of what 'tis fit these young Virgins should do and avoid; and whatever by that, or by any more exact rule appears their Interest or Duty, 'tis the Mother's to see it be not neglected by them: but where Kindness alone will not prevail, to employ their Authority too, and by a discreet mixture of each, secure their observance by both the tenures of Love and Reverence. Yet I shall a little reflect upon one particular I mention'd before, I mean that of Marrying where they have aversion; which tho' I there charg'd as the crime of the Daughter, yet I must here say the original and more

inexcusable guilt is usually in the Parents ; who are sometimes such Idolaters to Wealth and Honour, that they sacrifice their Children to them ; a more barbarous Immolation than that to *Moloch*. For though that were very inhuman, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was short : but a loath'd Bed is at once an acute and lingering Torment ; nay, not only so, but a most unlimited kind, extends it's effects even to Eternity : and sure that Mother must have very petrified Bowels, have lost all natural Compassion, that can so impose on her Child.

46. I shall add no more concerning this relation of a Mother, but only one short advice, that those who groan under the frustration of their Hopes, whose Children by any scandalous Misbehaviour become the objects of their Shame and Grief, would soberly consider, whether it have not been some way owing to themselves, either by neglect in their Education, or by their own ill Example. 'Tis usually one, and sometimes both. They that upon recollection can assure themselves 'tis neither, may bear the affliction with much the greater Cheerfulness, but they that cannot, I am sure ought to bear it with much the more Patience and Submission, take it as God's lecture of Repentance, and look on their Children's faults as the product of their own. And because Satisfaction is an indispensable part of Repentance, they are with their utmost industry to endeavour the repairing

ing those ruins they have made, by recalling those to Virtue, who by their means have stray'd from it. 'Tis true, the errors of Education, like a subtle Poison, do so mix with the Blood, so incorporate into the Humours and Manners, that 'twill be very difficult to allay their effects; and therefore the less they are themselves able to do towards it, the more earnestly they must importune an higher power. He who divided the Light from the Darkeness, can separate the effects from the causes; and as he restrain'd the natural property of fire in the case of the three Children, *Dan. 3.* so he only can rescue their Children from that Destruction to which their Negligence has expos'd them. But as to the influence their examples have had they may do something towards the redress of that, by setting them a new *Copy*, making their own change so visible, so remarkable, that they may have the very same means of reclaiming, which there was of seducing them. And this is a piece of justice which seems to call aloud upon many Mothers. The irregularities of Youth could hardly have grown to the present height, had they not receiv'd warmth and shelter from the practice of their elders, which do's at once give encouragement and take off restraints, the Mother loosing not only her authority but her confidence to admonish or reprove. With what face can she require that strict and severe Modesty of a young Girl, which she

she who should be a Matron will not practice? or tie up the giddy wandering humour of Youth, within those bounds she thinks too strait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even Scripture it self afford for such an imposer? *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self?* Rom. 2. 21. Let it therefore be the care of all Mothers to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, so to exemplify to them all Vertue and Piety, that they may contribute something to their spiritual, as well as their natural Life; that however they may at least deliver their own Souls, and not have their Children's guilt recoil upon them, as the unhappy originals of it.

47. THE last relation of a marry'd Woman, is that of a Mistress, the inspection of the Family being usually her Province; and tho' she be not supreme there, yet she is to improve her delegated Authority to the advantage of all under it. And her more constant residence gives her more opportunities of it, than the frequent avocations of the Husband will perhaps allow him. St. Paul says it is the calling, and indispensable duty of the Marry'd Women, *That they guide the house,* 1 Tim. 5. 18. not thinking it a point of Greatness to remit the manage of all domestick concerns to a mercenary House-keeper. And indeed, since it has been a fashionable thing for a Master to resign up his concerns to the Steward, and the Lady hers to the Governant, it has gone ill with most great Families;

milies ; whilst these Officers serve themselves instead of those who employ them, raise fortunes on their Patron's ruins, and divide the spoil of the Family ; the House-keeper pilfering within doors, and the Bailiff plundering without.

48. Now to the well-guiding of the House by the Mistress of it, I know no better or more comprehensive rule, than for her to endeavour to make all that are hers, to be God's Servants also. This will secure her of all those intermediate qualifications in them, in which her secular interest is concern'd, their own Consciences being the best spy she can set up on them as to their Truth and Fidelity, and the best spur also to Diligence and Industry. But to the making them such, there will need first Instruction, and secondly Discipline. It is a necessary part of the Ruler's care to provide that none in their Family should want means of necessary instruction. I do not say that the Mistress should set up for a Catechist or Preacher ; but that they take order they should be taught by those that are qualify'd for the employment. And that their furnishing them with knowledge, may not serve only to help them to a greater number of stripes, *Luke 12. 47.* they are to give them the opportunities of consecrating it by Prayer and Devotion ; to that end to have publick Divine Offices in the Family ; and that not by starts or accident's (when a devouter Guest is to be en-

tain'd, and laid by, when a profane) but daily and regularly, that the hours of Prayer may be fix'd and constant as those of Meals, and (if it may possibly be) as much frequented; however that towards it she give both Precept and Example.

49. A Christian Family should be the Epitome of a Church; but alas! how many among us lie under a perpetual interdict: and yet not from the usurpation of any forreign power, but from the Irregulation of the Domestic? One may go into divers great Families, and after some stay there, not be able to say that the name of God was mention'd to any other purpose than that of Blasphemy and Execration; not a text of Scripture, unless in Burlesque and Profane Drollery. And sure we need not wonder at the universal complaint that is now made of ill Servants, when we reflect upon this ill Government of Families. They that are suffer'd wholly to forget their Duty towards God, will not always remember it towards Man. Servants are not such Philosophers, that upon the bare strength of a few Moral instincts they will be Virtuous: and if by a customary neglect of all things Sacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this World, they will often find temptation enough here to discard their Honesty, as the most unthriving Trade. And indeed when the awe of Religion is quite taken
off

off from the vulgar, there will scarce any thing else be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; so that 'tis no less impolitick than profane to slacken that Rein.

50. BUT it is not only the interest, but the duty of all that have Families, to keep up the esteem and practice of Religion in them. 'Twas one of the greatest endearments of *Abraham* to God, *That he would command his household to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19.* And *Joshua* undertakes no less for the Piety of his household, than himself, *As for me and my house we will serve the Lord, Josh. 24. 15.* And sure 'tis but reasonable, that where we our selves owe an Homage, we should make all our Dependents acknowledge the same. Besides, it is a justice in respect of them; for where we entertain a servant, we take the whole Person into our care and protection, and are false to that undertaking, if we suffer his Soul, the most precious part of him, to perish. And God, who keeps account even of his meanest Creatures, will not patiently resent such a neglect of those who bare his own Image, and were ransom'd with as great a price as their Masters were, *for there is no respect of persons with God, Eph. 6. 9.*

51. BUT when Piety is planted in a Family, 'twill soon wither, if it be not kept in vigour by discipline: nay, indeed to have Servants seemingly devout in the Oratory, and

yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert one's House into a Theater, have a play of Religion, and keep a set of Actors only to Personate and Represent it. 'Tis therefore necessary to enquire how they behave themselves when they are off the Stage; whether those hands which they elevate in Prayer are at other times industriously apply'd to work; or those mouths wherewith they there bless God, are not elsewhere fill'd with Oaths and Curses, Scurrilities and Revilings: in a word, whether that form of Godliness be not design'd in commutation for Sobriety and Honesty. Indeed, the Governors of Families ought to make a strict inspection into the manners of their Servants, and where they find them good, to affix some special mark of favour, by which they may both be encourag'd to persevere, and others to begin; but where they find them vicious, there as eminently to discountenance, severely to admonish them, and use all fit means for their reclaiming, and when that seems hopeless, to dismiss them that they may not infect the rest. *A little leaven, saith the Apostle, leaveneth the whole lump, Gal. 5. 9.* and one ill Servant (like a perish'd Tooth) will be apt to corrupt his fellows. 'Tis therefore the same in Families that it is in more publick Communities, where severity to the ill is mercy and protection to the rest; and were houses thus early weeded of all idle and vicious Persons, they would not be so

overgrown, nor degenerate into such rude wildernesses, as many (nay I fear most) great Families now are.

52. BUT as Servants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, so neither are they to be defeated of any of their dues. Masters are to give to their Servants, that which is *just and equal*, Gal. 4. 1 And sure 'tis but just and equal that they who are rational Creatures should not be treated with the rigour or contempt of brutes: a sufficient and decent provision, both in sickness and in health, is a just debt to them, besides an exact performance of those particular contracts upon which they were entertain'd. *Laban* had so much of natural justice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacob's* relation to him to make him serve him *gratis*, *Because thou art my brother, shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me therefore what shall thy wages be*, Gen. 29. 15. But alas! now adays where Servants have been told, nay, expressly articled with for their wages, 'tis with many no easy thing to get it: nay 'tis thought by some Masters an insolence, a piece of ill manners to demand it; and when they have worn out a Servant, they either pay him not at all, or with the same protraction and regret, which they do their Taylors for the old Cloaths they have cast of. I fear there are many instances of this, especially among great Persons; it being a receiv'd mode with too ma-

ny of them to pay no debts to those who are too mean to contest with them. But however they may ruffle it out with Men, it will one day arraign them before God as most injurious Oppressors; there being no crime of that kind more frequently or more severely branded in Scripture, than this of the detention of the wages of the Servant and Hireling. Besides, this example of injustice, wherein the Servant is passive, is often transcrib'd by him in acts of Fraud and Deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal Retaliation, to break his Trust where the Master breaks his Covenant; and when he once attempts to be his own pay-master, 'tis not to be doubted but he will allow himself large use for the forbearance of his wages; so that the course is no less unprofitable to the Master, than unjust and dishonourable.

53. I am not sure 'tis always in the Wife's power to prevent this or any of the former faults in the menage of the Family. For her authority being but subordinate, if the Husband who is supreme suspend her Power, he do's by that vacating her Rule, take off the duty consequent to it; so that what I have said, can be Obligatory to none that are so impeded: but to those who can either do it themselves, or perswade their Husbands to it, the omission will be their sin: all the Profaneness and Disorder of the Family will be charg'd upon their account, if it came by their default.

54. AND

54. AND this, methinks, is a consideration that may much mortify one usual piece of Vanity, I mean, that of a multitude of Servants. We shall all of us find burthen enough of our own personal miscarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in families 'tis generally observable, that the bigger they are, the worse; Vice gains boldness by numbers, is hatch'd up by the warmth of a full society; and we daily see people venture upon those Enormities in Consort, and in a Croud, which they would not dare, did they think they stood single. Besides, the wider the Province is, the more difficult it is well to administer it; and in a heap of Servants many faults will escape undiscern'd: especially considering the common confederacy there is usually among them, for the eluding of discipline: so that what the Wise Man speaks of not desiring a multitude of unprofitable Children, I think may be very well apply'd to Servants, whose unprofitableness usually increases together with their number. I have now run through the several obligations consequent to the Marry'd state, wherein even upon this very cursory view, there appear so many particulars, that if they were all duly attended, Ladies need not be much at a loss how to entertain themselves, nor run abroad in a *Romantick* quest after forreign divertisements, when they have such variety of engagements at home.

S E C T.



SECT. III.

Of Widows.

I. **T**HE next state which can succeed to that of Marriage, is Widow-hood; which tho' it supersedes those duties which be terminated merely in the person of the Husband, yet it endears those which may be paid to his ashes, *love is strong as death, Cant. 8. 6.* and therefore when it is pure and genuine, cannot be extinguish'd by it, but burns like the Funeral Lamps of old even in Vaults and Charnel-houses. The Conjugal love transplanted into the grave, (as into a finer mould) improves into Piety, and lays a kind of sacred Obligation upon the Widow, to perform all
 Offices

Offices of Respect and Kindness which his Remains are capable of.

2. Now those Remains are of three sorts, his Body, his Memory, and his Children. The most proper expression of her Love to the first, is in giving it an Honourable Interment; I mean not such as may vie with the *Poland* Extravagance, (of which 'tis observ'd, that two or three near succeeding Funerals ruin the Family) but prudently proportion'd to his Quality and Fortune; so that her zeal to his Corps may not injure a nobler Relick of him, his Children. And this decency is a much better instance of her kindness, than all those Tragical Furies wherewith some Women seem Transported towards their dead Husbands, those Frantick Embraces and Carresses of a Carcass, which betray a little too much the sensuality of their Love. And 'tis something observable, that those vehement Passions quickly exhaust themselves, and by a kind of sympathetick Efficacy, as the Body (on which their Affection was fix'd) moulders, so do's that also; nay, often it attends not those leisurely degrees of Dissolution, but by a more precipitate Motion, seems rather to Vanish than Consume.

3. THE more valuable kindness therefore, is that to his Memory, endeavouring to Embalm that, to keep it from perishing; and by this innocent Magick (as the *Egyptians* were wont

wont by a more guilty) she may Converse with the Dead, represent him so to her own thoughts, that his Life may still be repeated to her; and as in a broken Mirrour the Refraction multiplies the Images, so by his Dissolution, every hour presents distinct Idea's of him; so that she sees him the oftner, for his being hid from her Eyes. But as they use not to Embalm without Odours, so she is not only to preserve, but perfume his Memory, render it as Fragrant as she can, not only to her self, but others; by reviving the remembrance of whatever was praise-worthy in him, vindicating him from all Calumnies and false Accusations, and stifling (or allaying) even true ones as much as she can. And indeed a Widow can no way better provide for her own Honour, than by this tenderness of her Husband's.

4. YET there is another expression of it, inferiour to none of the former, and that is the setting such a value upon her Relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. 'Twas the dying charge of *Augustus* to his Wife *Livia*, *Behave thy self well, and remember our Marriage.* And she who has been a Wife to a Person of Honour, must so remember it, as not to do any thing below her self, or which he (could he have foreseen it) should justly have been asham'd of.

5. THE last Tribute she can pay him, is in his Children. These he leaves as his Proxies

xies to receive the kindness of which himself is incapable ; so that the Children of a Widow may claim a double portion of the Mother's Love ; one upon their native right, as hers ; the other, as a bequest in right of their dead Father. And indeed, since she is to supply the place of both Parents, 'tis but necessary she should put on the Affections of both, and to the tenderness of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. First, in a sedulous care of their Education : and next, in a prudent managery of their Fortunes, an order that is sometimes unhappily inverted, and Mothers are so concern'd to have the Estate prosper in their Tuition, that the Children cannot ; whilst (by an unseasonable Frugality) to save a little Expence, they deny them the advantages of an Ingenuous and Gentile Breeding ; swell their Estates perhaps to a vast bulk, but so contract and narrow their minds, that they know not how to dispose them to any real benefit of themselves or others. And this is one of the most pernicious Parsimonies imaginable. A Mother by this seems to adopt the Fortune, and abdicate the Child, who is only made the Beast to bear those loads of Wealth she will lay on, and which she evidently owns as the greatest Treasure, since in tenderness to that she neglects him.

6. YET sometimes the same effect springs from another cause, and Children are ill bred,

G g

not

not because the Mother grudges the charge, but out of a Feminine fondness, which permits her not to part with them to the proper places for their Education. Like *Jacob* to *Benjamin*, her Soul is so bound up in them, that she cannot lend them a while even to their own most necessary concerns. And this tho' not so ignoble a motive as the other, is of no less mischief, at least to her Sons, who being by it confin'd at home, are consequently condemn'd to be poison'd (if with nothing else, yet) with the flatteries of Servants and Tenants, who think those the best expedient to secure their own station. And with these the young Master or Landlord is so blown up, that, as if his Manours were the Confines of the World, he can look at nothing beyond them: so that when at last he breaks loose from his Mother's Arms and comes abroad, he expects scarce to find his equals, much less his betters; thinks he is still to receive the same fawning adorations which he was us'd to at home: and being possess'd with this insolent expectation, he will scarce be undeceiv'd, but at the price of many affronts: nay, perhaps he may buy his experience with the loss of his Life; by his ill Manners draw on a Quarrel, wherein he finally perishes. That this is no impossible supposition, some unhappy Mothers have found to their unspeakable affliction.

7. 'TIS not to be deny'd, but there are
also

also Dangers consequent to the Breeding Children abroad, Vice having insinuated it self even into the places of Erudition, and having not only as many, but the very same Academies with Virtue and Learning; so that the extreme Depravation of the times new states the Question, and we are not to consider which is best, but which is the least ill disposure of Children. And in that competition sure the Home-Education will be cast; for there they may suck in all the Venom, and nothing of the Antidote, they will not only be taught base things, but (as I before observ'd) by the basest Tutors, such as will add all the most sordid circumstances to the improving of a Crime. Whereas abroad they are first not like to meet with any whose interest it is so much to make them vicious. And secondly, they may (as ill as the World is) meet with many who may give them both Precepts and Examples of a better kind. Besides the Discipline us'd in those Communities makes them know themselves; and the various sorts of Learning they may acquire, will not only prove useful divertisement (the want of which is the great spring of mischief) but will, if rightly apply'd, furnish them with Ingenuous and Virtuous Principles, such as may set them above all Vile and Ignoble Practices. So that there seems a Conspiracy of Motives to wrest the Child from the reluct-

ing Mother, and to perswade her for a while, to deny her self that desire of her Eyes, that so he may at last answer the more rational desire of her Heart.

8. As to the other part of her Obligation, the managing of their Fortune, there is the same Rule for her as for all other Persons that have a Trust, *viz.* to do as for themselves, that is, with the same care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own peculiar Concern. I do not say that she shall confound the property, and make it indeed her own, by applying it to her peculiar use, a thing I fear which is too often done, especially by the gayer sort of Widows, who, to keep up their own Equipage, do sometimes encroach upon their Son's peculiar. And I wish even that (tho' bad enough) were the only case wherein it were done, but 'tis sometimes to make her a better prize to a second Husband. She goes into another Family, and as if she were a Colony sent out by her Son, he must pay for the planting her there: indeed the oft repeating this injury, has advanc'd it now into a custom, and the management of the Minor's Estate is reckon'd on as part of the Widow's Fortune. But, I confess, I see not what there is in the title of a Mother, that can Legitimate her defrauding her Child; it rather envenoms the Crime, and adds unnaturalness to deceit. Besides, 'tis a preposterous
sort

fort of Guilt. Orphans and Widows are in Scripture link'd together as objects of God's and good Men's Pity, and of ill Men's Oppression; and how ill, alas, do's Civil War look among Fellow-sufferers! The Widow to injure the Orphan, is like the uncouth Oppression *Solomon* speaks of, *Prov. 28. 3. A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of Rapines are as excessive in their degree, as prodigious in their kind; and I believe there are many instances of Sons, who have suffer'd more by the Guardian-ship of their Mothers, than they could probably have done by the outrage of strangers.

9. How well such Mothers answer their obligations to their dead Husband's, I must leave it to their own Consciences to discuss; I shall only offer them these steps of gradation by which to proceed. First, that injustice of any sort is a great sin. Secondly, that when 'tis in a matter of Trust, 'tis complicated with Treachery also. Thirdly, that of all Trusts those to the dead have always been esteem'd the most Sacred. If they can find any allay to these by the two remaining circumstances, that 'tis the trust of a Husband, and the interest of a Child, I shall confess them very subtle Casuists.

10. I have hitherto spoke of what the Widow owes to her dead Husband; but there is also

also somewhat of peculiar Obligation in relation to her self. God who has plac'd us in this World to pursue the interests of a better, directs all the signal Acts of his Providence to that end, and intends we should so interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is design'd either to recall us from a wrong way, or to quicken our pace in the right; and a widow may more than conjecture, that when God takes away the Mate of her bosom, reduces her to a solitude, he do's by it found a Retreat from the lighter Jollities and Gayeties of the World. And as in compliance with Civil Custom she immures her self, sits in darkness for a while: so she should put on a more retir'd Temper of Mind, a more strict and severe Behaviour; and that not to be cast off with her Veil, but to be the constant dress of her Widow-hood. Indeed that state as it requires a great Sobriety and Piety, so it affords many advantages towards it. The Apostle tells us, *That she who is married careth for the things of the World, how she may please her Husband, 1 Corin. 7.* 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a Wife, which yet are great Avocations, and Interruptions of a strict Devotion; when she is Manu-mitted from that subjection, when she has less of *Martha's care of serving*, she is then at liberty to choose *Mary's part*, *Luke 10. 42.* she has

has her Time and her Fortune at her own command, and consequently may much more abound in the works both of Piety and Charity. We find God himself retrench'd the Wife's power of binding her own Soul. *Numb.* 30. her Vows were totally insignificant without her Husband's Confirmation; but the Widow might devote her self to what degree she pleas'd: her Piety has no restraint from any other inconsistent Obligation, but may swell as high as it can. Those hours which were before her Husband's right, seem now to devolve on God the grand Proprietor of our time: that discourse and free Converse wherewith she entertain'd him, she may now convert into Colloquies and Spiritual intercourse with her Maker; and that Love which was only Human before, by the change of it's Object acquires a sublimity, is exalted into Divine: from Loyal Duty and Conjugal Affection becomes the Eternal work and Happiness of Angels, the Ardour of a Cherubim. Thus may she in a higher sense verify *Samson's* Riddle, *Judg.* 14. 14. *fetch honey out of a carcass.* make her Husband's ashes (like those of the Heifer under the Law, *Heb.* 9. 13.) *her purification*: his Corruption may help her to put on Incorruption, and her loss of a Temporary comfort may instate her in an Eternal

II. AND as her self, so her Fortune may also be Consecrated: and indeed if she be,
that

that will also : if she have made an escape out of *Egypt*, *there shall not an hoof be left behind* her, *Exod.* 10. 26. no part of her possessions will be assign'd to Vanity and Excess. She who hath really devoted her self to Piety, *fasted and prayed with Anna*, *Luke* 2. 37. will also be *full of good works and alms-deeds* with *Tabitha*, *Acts* 9. 36. Thus she may be a Mother when she ceases to bear; and tho' she no more encrease one Family, she may support many. And certainly the fertility of the Womb is not so valuable as this of the Bowels: Fruitfulness can be but an happiness, Compassion is a Virtue. Nay indeed 'tis a greater and more certain Happiness: a Child is not brought forth but with Pangs and Anguish, but a work of Mercy is produc'd not only with ease but delight. Besides, she that bears a Child, knows not whether it may prove a Blessing or a Curse; but Charity gives a certain title to a Blessing, and engages the most solvent Pay-master, even God himself, who owns all such disbursements, as a loan to him. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again*, *Prov.* 19. 17.

12. THERE was in the primitive times an Ecclesiastical Order of Widows, which *Saint Paul* mentions, *1 Tim.* 5. whose whole Ministry was devoted to Charity. They were indeed of the poorer sort, fit rather to receive
than

than to give Alms; yet the less they could do with their Purfes, the more was requir'd of their Persons, the humbler Offices of *washing the Saints Feet*, the careful task of *bringing up Children*, and a diligent *attendance on every good work*. And sure there is parity of reason, that those who upon the score of their Wealth, exempt themselves from those laborious services, should commute for it by more liberal Alms. In the Warmth and Zeal of Christianity, Women of the highest Quality perform'd both sorts of Charity, forgot their greatness in their condescensions, yet assum'd it again in their bounty; founded Hospitals, and yet with a *labour of love*, as the Apostle styles it, *Heb. 6. 10.* disdain'd not sometimes to serve in them. But these are examples not like to be transcrib'd in our days; greatness is now grown to such an unwieldiness that it cannot stoop, tho' to the most Christian Offices, and yet can as little soar up in any Munificent Charities: it stands like *Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image*, a vast bulk only to be ador'd.

13. Now certainly, if any Women be qualify'd to advert this Reproach, it must be the Dowagers of great Families and Fortunes: they have none to Countroul their Visits to the Sick and Afflicted, or to resent a disparagement from their Humility, neither have they an account to give of their possessions to any but God and themselves: to him sure they can

H h

bring

bring none so like to procure them the Eulogy of *well done thou good and faithful servant*, Matth. 25. 21. as a Catalogue of their Alms. Nor indeed can they any other way dispose their Fortune so much to their own Contentment; they may possibly Cloy and Sate their Senses, make provision for the Flesh; but that no way satisfies their Reason, much less their Conscience. The Soul, which is the superiour part, is quite left out in that distribution; nothing is Communicated to it but the guilt of those dear bought Excesses. The only way it has to be sharer in their Wealth, is by a Charitable dispensing. The poor are it's Proxies as well as God's, and tho' in all other respects we may say to the Soul, as the *Psalmist* do's to God, *Psal. 16 2. my goods extend not to thee*: yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietour, and all is laid out for it's use. The harbouring an out-cast, builds it *an everlasting habitation*, Luke 16, 9. the clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure white linnen*, Rev. 19. 8. and the feeding the hungry, makes it a guest *at the supper of the Lamb*, v. 9. Nay, it gains not only an indefeisible title to these happy Reversions, but it has a great deal in present Possession, a huge Rational complacency in the right applying of Wealth, and doing that with it, for which 'twas design'd. Yet more, it gives a sensitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to Human

man nature, than the doing good to it's own kind. A seasonable Alms leaves a greater exultation and transport in the giver, than it can ordinarily raise in the receiver; so exemplifying the maxim of our blessed Lord, that it is a *more blessed thing to give than to receive*, *Acts* 20. 35. This indeed is a way to elude the severe denunciation of the Apostle, *1 Tim.* 5. 6. *A Widow that liveth in this pleasure, is not dead while she liveth*, but on the contrary, shall live when she dies; when she resigns her breath, shall improve her being: the Prayers of the poor, like a benign gale, shall assist her flight to the Region of Bliss; and she who has here cherish'd the afflicted Members, shall there be indissolubly united to their glorious Head.

14. AND now methinks Widow-hood, under this aspect, is quite transform'd, is not so forlorn, so desolate an estate as it is usually esteem'd. And would all Widows use but this expedient, thus devote themselves to Piety and Charity, it would, like the healing Tree, *Exod.* 15. 25. sweeten these waters of *Marah*, render the Condition not only supportable, but pleasant; and they would not need to make such affrighted, such disadvantageous escapes, as many do, from it. 'Tis true, the Apostle's affirmation is unquestionable, that *the wife, when her husband is dead, is at liberty to be married to whom she will*, *1 Cor.* 7. 39. But the

advice he subjoyns is authentick too, *she is happier if she so abide.* She that may solace her self in the Society, in the Love of her God, makes an ignoble descent to Human Embraces; she that may purchase Heaven with her Wealth, buys a very dear bargain of the best Husband on Earth. Nay indeed upon a mere secular account, it seems not very prudent to relinquish both Liberty and Property, to Espouse at the best a Subjection, but perhaps a Slavery; it a little resembles the mad frolicks of free'd Gallyslaves, who play away their liberty as soon as they regain it.

16. MARRIAGE is so great an adventure, that once seems enough for the whole Life: for whether they have been prosperous or adverse in the first, it do's almost discourage a second Attempt. She that has had a good Husband, may be suppos'd to have his Idea so fix'd in her Heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new Form: nay, farther, she may very reasonably doubt, that in this common dearth of Virtue, two good Husbands will scarce fall to one Woman's share, and an ill one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections she will be apt to make on the better. On the other side, if she have had a bad, the smart sure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off; the memory of what she has suffer'd should, methinks, be a competent Caution against new Adventures.

Yet

Yet experience shews us, that Women (tho' the weaker Sex) have commonly fortitude enough to Encounter and Baffle all these Considerations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be said, be diverted from Re-marrying: and indeed she that do's not preserve her Widowhood upon the accounts fore-mention'd, may perhaps better relinquish it. St. *Paul* we see advises that those *Widows* who found no better employment *than going from house to house*, that grew by their vacancy to be *tatlers and busie bodies*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. should Marry again, it being the best way to fix these wandering Planets, to find them business of their own at home, that so they may not ramble abroad to intermeddle with that of others. And the truth is, they that cannot brook the retiredness and gravity which becomes a Widow, had better put themselves in a state that less requires it, and if they resolve not to conform their Minds to their Condition, to bring their Condition to their Minds. But in the doing that there will be some cautions very necessary to be observ'd. I shall reduce them to two, the one relating to the Time, the other to the Equality of the Match.

16. FIRST in respect of Time, common decency requires that there be a considerable interval between the parting with one Husband, and the choosing another. This has been

been so much observ'd by Nations that were at all Civiliz'd, that we find *Numa* made it a Law, that no Widow should Marry under ten months, and if any did, she was to sacrifice as for the Expiation of a Crime. And this continu'd in force many Ages after, insomuch that when upon Reasons of State, *Augustus* found it useful to Marry his Sister *Octavia* to *Antonius*, nothing less than a Decree of the Senate could licence the anticipating the time; so jealous observers were they of this point of Civility, that they thought the whole state was concern'd in the Violation. 'Tis true we have no Law in the case, but we have somewhat of Custom: I know not how long we shall have, since the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to Cancel it: yet a Woman that is tender of her Honour will scarce give her example towards the rescinding it. The wounds of grief are seldom heal'd by any hand but that of Time, and therefore too sudden a cure shews the hurt pierc'd not deep; and she that can make her Mourning-veil an optick to draw a new Lover nearer to her sight, gives cause to suspect the Sables were all without.

17. THE next thing considerable is the Equality of the Match. Marriage is so close a link, that to have it easy, 'tis good to have the parties as even proportion'd as may be. And first, in respect of Quality and Fortune, 'tis to be wish'd there should be no eminent dispro-

disproportion. Those that meet most upon a level, are least subject to those upbraidings that often attend a great Descent of either party. It is therefore no prudent motive, by which some Widows are sway'd who Marry only for a great Title; who often do not meet with so much Obeisance from strangers, as they do with Contempt from their Husbands and his Relations. There have been examples of Lords, who have us'd Rich, but Inferiour Widows like sponges, squeez'd them to fill themselves with their Wealth, and them only with the Air of a big Name. On the other side, for a Woman to Marry very meanly, and too much below her self, is rather worse; those kind of Matches are ordinarily made in a Transport of Passion, and when that abates and leaves her to sober Reflections, she will probably be so angry with her self, that she will scarce be well pleas'd with her Husband. A state of Subjection is a little sweeten'd by the Worth and Dignity of a Rule: for as it is more Honourable, so 'tis also more easy, the serviler Spirits being of all others the most Imperious in Command. And sure 'twill not a little grate a Woman of Honour, to think she has made such a one her Master, who perhaps would before have thought it a preferment to have been her Servant. Nay farther, such Marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the Modesty of the
Woman,

Woman, it being usuall presum'd that where the distance was so great, as to discourage such an Attempt on his part, there was some invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts she is very forlorn who thus disposes of her self. Yet 'tis too well known such Matches have oft been made, and the same levity and inconsideration may betray others to it; and therefore 'tis their concern well to ballast their Minds, and to provide that their Passion never get the ascendant over their Reason.

18. ANOTHER very necessary Equality is that of their judgement as to Religion. I do not mean that they are to Catechize each other, as to every minute speculative point: but that they be of the same Profession, so as to joyn together in the Worship of God.. It is sure very uncomfortable that those who have so closely combin'd all their other interests, should be dis-united in the greatest: that one Church cannot hold them, whom one House, one Bed do's; and that Religion, which is in it self the most uniting thing, should be the only disagreement between them. I know 'tis oft made a Compact in such Matches, that neither shall impose their Opinion upon the other: yet I doubt 'tis seldom kept, unless it be by those whose carelesness of all Religion abates their zeal to any one. But where they have any earnestness in their way, especially where the one party thinks the other in a damnable Error,

Error, 'twill scarce be possible to refrain endeavouring to reduce them; and that endeavour begets disputes, those disputes heats, those heats disgusts, and those disgusts perhaps end in aversion; so that at last their Affections grow as irreconcilable as their opinions, and their Religious jars draw on Domestick. Besides if none of these personal Debates happen, yet the Education of the Children will be matter of dispute; the one Parent will still be countermining the other, each seeking to recover the other's Profelytes. Nay, it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the Family too; their Servants according to their different persuasions bandy into Leagues and Parties; so that it endangers, if not utterly destroy's all Concord in Families: and all this train of mischiefs should methinks be a competent prejudice against such Matches.

19. THERE is yet a third particular wherein any great disproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in years. The humours of Youth and Age differ so widely, that there had need be a great deal of skill to compose the discord into a harmony. When a young Woman marries an old Man, there are commonly jealousies on the one part, and loathings on the other, and if there be not an eminent degree of discretion in one or both, there will be perpetual disagreements. But this is a case that do's not often happen among those I now

ſpeak to; for tho' the avarice of Parents ſometimes forces Maids upon ſuch Matches, yet Widows who are their own chooſers, ſeldom make ſuch Elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other ſide, and old Women marry young Men. Indeed any marriage is in ſuch, a folly and dotage. They who ſuddenly muſt make their beds in the duſt, what ſhould they think of a Nuptial Couch? And to ſuch the Answer of the Philoſopher is appoſite, who being demanded what was the fitteſt time for marrying, replied, for the young not yet, for the old not at all.

20. BUT this dotage becomes a perfect frenzy and madneſs, when they chooſe young Huſbands: this is an accumulation of abſurdities and contradictions. The Huſband and the Wife are but one Perſon; and yet at once young and old, freſh and wither'd. 'Tis a reverſing the decrees of nature: and therefore 'twas no ill answer which *Dionyſius* the Tyrant gave to his Mother, who in her age deſign'd ſuch a match, that, tho' by his Regal Power he could diſpenſe with poſitive Laws, yet he could not abrogate thoſe of nature, or make it fit for her an old Woman to marry a young Man. 'Tis indeed an inverſion of Seaſons, a confounding the Kalendar, making a mongrel Month of *May* and *December*: and the Conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious: it being ſcarce ever ſeen that ſuch a match
proves

proves tolerably happy. And indeed 'tis not imaginable how it should; for first 'tis to be presum'd, that she that marries so must marry meanly. No young Man who do's not need her Fortune will take her Person. For tho' some have the humour to give great rates for inanimate Antiquities, yet none will take the living *gratis*. Next she never misses to be hated by him she marries: he looks on her as his rack and torment, thinks himself under the lingring torture devised by *Mezentius*, a living body ty'd to a dead. Nor must she think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: she may buy beauty, and yet can never make it her own; may Paint, yet never be fair. 'Tis like Enameling a mud-wall, the coarseness of the ground will spoil the Varnish; and the greatest exquisiteness of dress serves but to illustrate her native blemishes. So that all she gains by this is to make him scorn as well as abhor her.

21. INDEED there is nothing can be more ridiculous, than an old Woman gaily set out; and it was not unaptly said of *Diogenes* to such a one, if this decking be for the living, you are deceiv'd; if for the dead, make haste to them: and I doubt many young Husbands will be ready to say as much. Nay, because death comes not quick enough to part them, there are few have patience to attend its loytering pace: the Man bids adieu to the Wife

tho' not to her Fortune, takes that to maintain his luxuries else-where, allows her some little Annuity, and makes her a Pensioner to her own Estate. So that he has his design, but she none of hers; he married for her Fortune, and he has it; she for his Person, and has it not: and which is worse, buys her defeat with the loss of all he commonly leaving her as empty of Money as he found her of Wit.

22. AND truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet usually fails even of that comfort which is the last reserve of the miserable, I mean pity. 'Tis the Wise man's question, *Ecclesiast. 12. 13. Who will pity a Charmer that is bitten with a Serpent?* He might have presum'd less on his skill, and kept himself at a safer distance: and sure the like may be said of her. Alas! what are her feeble Charms, that she should expect by them to fix the giddy appetites of youth? And since she could so presume without sense, none will regret that she should be convinced by smart. Besides, this is a case wherein there have been a multitude of unhappy precedents which might have caution'd her. He that accidentally falls down an undiscovered precipice is compassionated for his disaster; but he that stands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and sees the bottom strew'd with the mangled Carcasses of many that have thence fallen; if he shall deliberately cast himself into their company, the

the blame quite extinguishes the pity ; he may astonish, but not melt the beholders. And truly she who casts her self away in such a Match, betrays not less, but more wilfulness. How many ruins of unhappy Women present themselves to her, like the wrecks of old Vessels, all split upon this Rock ? And if she needs steer her course purposely to the same, none ought to grudge her the Shipwrack she so courts.

23. NOR has she only this negative discomfort, to be deprived of pity, but she is loaded with censures and reproaches. The world is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but 'tis seldom guilty of the charitable, do's not overlook the smallest appearance of evil, but generally puts the worst construction on any act, that it will with any probability bear ; and according to that measure, Women in this condition can expect no very mild descants on them. Indeed such Matches are so destitute of any rational plea, that 'tis hard to derive them from any other motive than the sensitive. What the common conjectures are in that case, is as needless as it is unhandsome to declare : I will not say how true they are ; but if they be, it adds another reason to the former, why such marriages are so improsperous. All Distortions in nature are usually ominous ; and sure such preternatural heats in Age, may very well
be

reckon'd as dismal Presages, and very certain ones too, since they create the ruin they foretell. And truly 'tis not only just, but convenient, that such motives should be attended with such consequences; that the bitterness of the one, may occasion some reflexion on the fordidness of the other. 'Tis but kindly, that such an *All ballon-tide* spring should meet with frosts, and the unpleasantness of the event chastise the ugliness of the design; and therefore I think those that are conscious of the one, should be so far from murmuring, that they should be very thankful for the other, think it God's discipline to bring them again to their wits; and not repine at the smart which themselves have made necessary.

24. AND now I wish all the Ancienter Widows would seriously weigh how much 'tis their interest not to sever those Epithets; that of Ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of Widow is sure a more proportionable adjunct to it, than that of Wife; especially when it is to one to whom her age might have made her Mother. There is a veneration due to age, if it be such as disowns not it self; *The hoary head, says Solomon, is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness,* Prov. 16. 31. but when it will mix it self with youth, it is disclaim'd by both, becomes the shame of the Old, and the scorn of the Young. What a strange fury is it then which possesses
such

such Women, that when they may dispose their Fortunes to those advantageous designs before mentioned, they should only buy with them, so undecent, so ridiculous a slavery ? that when they may keep up the reputation of Modesty and Prudence, they should expose themselves to an universal contempt for the want of both ? and that they who might have had a Reverence, put themselves even out of the capacity of bare Compassion ?

25. THIS is so high a frenzy, as sure cannot happen in an instant ; it must have some preparatory degrees, some rooting in the constitution and habit of the Mind. Such Widows have sure some lightness of humour, before they can be giddy in their Brains, and therefore those that will secure themselves, from the effect, must subtract the cause ; if they will be wishing themselves young, 'tis odds but within a while they will perswade themselves they are so. Let them therefore content themselves to be old, and as Fashions are varied with Times, so let them put on the Ornaments proper to their season, which are Piety, Gravity, and Prudence. These will not only be their Ornament, but their Armour too ; this will gain them such a Reverence, that will make it as improbable they should be assaulted, as impossible they should assault. For I think one may safely say, it is the want of one or all of those, which betrays Women to such Marriages.

26. AND

26. AND indeed it may be a matter of caution, even to the younger Widows, not to let themselves too much loose to a light frolick humour, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is most necessary they should. It will not much invite a sober Man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may (as natural motions use) grow more violent toward it's end: precipitate them into that ruinous folly we have before consider'd. Yet, should they happen to escape that, should it not force them from their Widow-hood, it will sure very ill agree with it: for how preposterous is it for an old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, such as were fitter to entertain her Grand-children? to read Romances with Spectacles, and be at Masks and Dancings, when she is fit only to act the Anticks? These are contradictions to nature, the tearing of her marks; and where she has writ fifty or sixty, to lessen (beyond the proportion of the unjust Steward) and write Sixteen. And those who thus manage their Widow-hood, have more reason to bewail it at last than at first, as having more experimentally found the mischief of being left to their own guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themselves under a safer Conduct, by an assiduous Devotion to render themselves up to the leading of the one infallible guide, who if he be
not

not a *covering of the eyes*, Gen. 20. 16. to preclude all second choices, may yet be *a light to them* for discerning who are fit to be chosen; that if they see fit to use their liberty and Marry, they may yet take the Apostle's restriction with it, 1 Cor. 7. 39. that *it be only in the Lord*, upon such sober motives, and with such due circumstances as may approve it to him, and render it capable of his benediction.





The Close.

1. **I** HAVE now gone through both parts of the propos'd method. The former has presented those qualifications which are equally necessary to every Woman. These, as a Root, send sap and Vigour to the distinct Branches, animate and impregnate the several successive states through which she is to pass. He that hath pure Ore or Bullion, may cast it into what Form best fits his use, nay, may translate it from one to another; and she who has that Mine of Virtues, may furnish out any condition: her being good in an absolute consideration, will certainly make her so in a relative. On the other side, she who has not such a stock, cannot keep up the honour of any state; like corrupted Liquor, empty
it

it from one vessel to another, it still infects and contaminates all. And this is the cause that Women are alike complain'd of under all Forms, because so many want this Fundamental Virtue. Were there more good Women, there would be more modest Virgins, Loyal and Obedient Wives, and sober Widows.

2. I must therefore intreat those who will look on this Tract, not only to single out that part which bears their own Inscription, but that they would think themselves no less concerned in that which relates indefinitely to their Sex; endeavour to possess themselves of those excellencies, which should be as universal as their kind: and when they are so stored with matter, they may leave Providence to diversify the shape, and to assign them their scene of action.

3. AND now, would God it were as easie to perswade, as it is to propose; and that this discourse may not be taken only as a *Gazette*, for its newness, and discarded as soon as read; but that it may at least advance to the honour of an Almanack, be allowed one year e're it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and seriously consulted, it may perhaps awaken some Ladies from their stupid Dreams, convince them that they were sent into the World for nobler purposes, than only to make a little glittering in it; like a Comet,

to give a blaze, and then disappear. And truly, if it may operate but so far as to give them an affective sense of that, I shall think it has done them a considerable service. They may, I am sure, from that Principle deduce all necessary consequences, and I wish they would but take the pains to draw the Corollaries; for those inductions they make to themselves, would be much more efficacious than those which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment: we love to be Profelytes to our selves; and people oft resist others reasons, who would upon mere partiality pay reverence to their own.

4. BUT besides this, there would be another advantage, if they could be but got to a custom of considering; by it they might insensibly undermine the grand Instrument of their Ruine. That careless incogitancy, so remarkably frequent among all, and not least among Persons of Quality, is the source of innumerable mischiefs, 'tis the *Delilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; it keeps them in a perpetual sleep, binds up their faculties, so that though they are not extinct, yet they become useless. *Plato* used to say, *That a Man asleep was good for nothing*: and 'tis certainly no less true of this Moral drowsiness than the Natural. And as in sleep the fancy only is in motion, so these inconsiderate persons do rather dream than discourse,

course, entertain little trifling Images of things which are presented by their senses, but know not how to converse with their reason. So that in this drowsy state, all Temptations come on them with the same advantage, with that of a *Thief in the Night*; a phrase by which the Scripture expresses the most inevitable unforeseen Danger, 1 *Thessalon.* 5. 2. We read in *Judges*, how easily *Laiſh* became a prey to a handful of Men, merely because of this supine negligent Humour of the Inhabitants, which had cut them off from all intercourse with any who might have succour'd them, *Judges* 18. 17. 28. And certainly it gives no less opportunity to our Spiritual Assailants, leaves us naked and unguarded to receive all their impressions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this state of dulness and danger should be affectedly chosen? Yet we see it too often is; even by those whose Qualities and Education fit them for more ingenuous Elections; nay, which is yet more a Riddle, that very aptness disenable, sets them above what it prepares them for. Labour is lookt on as utterly incompatible with greatness, and consideration is lookt on as labour of the Mind; and there are some Ladies who seem to reckon it as their prerogative, to be exempted from both; will no more apply their understandings to any serious discussion, than their hands to the Spindle and Distaff; the one they think
Pe-

Pedantick, as the other is mean. In the mean time, by what strange measures do they proceed; they look on Idiots as the most deplorable of Creatures, because they want Reason; and yet make it their own excellence and preeminence, to want the use of it; which is indeed so much worse than to want the thing, as sloth is worse than poverty, a Moral defect than a Natural. But we may see by this, how much Civil and Sacred estimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as *more noble* too, *Acts* 17. 11. because they attentively *consider'd*, and strictly examin'd the *Doctrine preached to them*. By which they may discern, that in God's Court of Honour, a stupid oscitancy is no ennobling Quality, however it comes to be thought so in theirs.

5. AND if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but so far actuate their reason, as deliberately and duly to weigh their interest, they would find that so strictly engaging them to all that is Virtuous, that they must have a very invincible Resolution for ruin, if that cannot perswade them. And I hope all Women are not *Medea's*, whom the Poet brings avowing the horridness of the fact, which yet she resolv'd to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to start at the apprehension of danger; let them but see a Serpent tho' at a great distance, they will
need

need no Homilies or Lectures to be perswaded to fly from it. And sure did they but clearly discern what a sting there is in those vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold, put them in such a trembling, as would like that of *Belshazzar's*, slacken their joints, and make those things drop from them, which before they most tenaciously grasped. For indeed, in sin there is a conspiracy of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, so that one may give its compendium by the very reverse of that which the Apostle gives of Godliness, 1 *Tim. 4. 8.* for as the one *has the promises*, so the other has the curses of *this life, and of that which is to come.*

6. IN this life every deprav'd Act (much more Habit) has a black shadow attending it; it casts one inward upon the Conscience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed, some have the art to disguise that to themselves by casting a yet darker over it, suppressing all those reluctings by an industrious stupefaction, making their Souls so perfect night, that they cannot see those black Images their Consciences represent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched, so neither can they blind others tho' they do themselves. Vice casts a dark shadow outwards too, not such as may conceal but betray it self: and as the Evening shadows increase in dimension, grow to a monstrosity and disproportion, so
the

the longer any ill habit is continued, the more visible, the more deform'd it appears, draws more observation and more censure.

7. T W E R E indeed endless to reckon up the Temporal evils to which it exposes its Votaries. Immodesty destroys their Fame, vain prodigality their Fortune, Anger makes them mad, Pride hateful, Levity renders them despis'd Obstinacy desperate, and Irreligion is a complication of all these, fills up their measure both of guilt and wretchedness. So that had Virtue no other advocate, her very Antagonist would plead for her: the miserable consequences of Vice, would like the flames of *Sodom*, send all considering persons to that little *Zoar*, which, how despicable soever it may have appear'd before, cannot but look invitingly, when safety is inscrib'd on its gates.

8. B U T it must infinitely more do so, if they please to open a *Visto* into the other World, make use of Divine perspectives to discern those distant objects which their grosser Senses do here intercept. There they may see the dismal Catastrophe of their Comedies, the miserable inversion of all unlawful or unbounded pleasures: there that Prophectic Menace concerning *Babylon* which we find, *Revelat.* 18. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy Soul, *According as she exalted her self and lived delicately, so much the more tribulation give her*; the Torment of that
life

life will bear proportion to the Pride and Luxuries of this. It will therefore be necessary for those who here wallow in pleasures, to confront to them the remembrance of those Rivers of Brimstone, and ask themselves the Prophet's question, *who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* We find *Esay*, when he denounces but Temporal Judgements against the Daughters of *Zion*, exactly pursues the Antithesis, and to every part of their Effeminate delicacy he opposes the direct contrary hardship, instead of *sweet smells*, *there shall be a stink*; instead of *girdle*, *a rent*; instead of *well set hair*, *baldness*; instead of *a stomacher*, *a girding with sackcloth*; and *burning instead of beauty*. *Esay* 3. 24.

9. IT were well the Daughters of our *Zion* would copy out this Lecture, and prudently fore-see how every particular Sin or Vanity of theirs, will have its adapted punishment in another World. And sure this consideration well digested, must needs be a forcible expedient to cleanse them from all *filthiness of flesh and spirit*, as the Apostle speaks, *2 Cor. 7. 1*. For is it possible for her to cherish and blow up her libidinous flames here, who considers them but as the first kindlings of those inextinguishable ones hereafter? Can she make it her study to please her Appetite, that remembers that *Dives's* uninterrupted feast ends in as unallayed a thirst? Or can she deny the crumbs of her Table to that *Lazarus*, to whom

she fore-sees she shall then supplicate for a drop of water? In fine can she lay out her whole Industry, her Fortune, nay her Ingenuity too, in making provision for the flesh, who considers that that flesh will more corrupt by pampering, and breed the worm that never dyes? Certainly no Woman can be so desperately daring, as thus to attacke damnation, resist her Reason and her Sense, only that she may ruin her Soul; and unless she can do all this, her fore-sight will prove her escape, and her viewing the bottomless pit in Landskip and Picture, will secure her from a real descent into it.

10. BUT now that this Tract may not make its *Exit* in the shape of a Fury, bring the meditations to Hell and there leave them, it must now at last shift the scene, and as it has shew'd the blackness of Vice by that outer darkness to which it leads, we also will let in a beam of the Celestial light to discover the beauty of Virtue; remind the Reader that there is a Region of Joy as well as a place of Torment, and Piety and Virtue is that milky way that leads to it; a state, compar'd to which the *Elysium* of the Heathen is as inconsiderable as it is fictitious, the *Mahometan Paradise* as flat and insipid as it is gross and brutish; where the undertaking of the Psalmist shall be completely answer'd, those *that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good,*
Psalm

Pſalm 34. 10. And this happy ſtate is as acceſſible as excellent. God is not unſincere in his propoſals, offers not theſe Glories only to tantalize and abuſe us, but to animate and encourage Mankind. He ſets up an inviting prize; and not only marks out, but levels the way to it; makes that our duty which is alſo our pleaſure, yea and our honour too. So has he contriv'd for our eaſe, that knowing how hardly we can divest our voluptuouſneſs and ambition, he puts us not to it: all he demands is but that he may chooſe the object. And in that he is yet more obliging, for by that at once he refines and ſatiſfies the deſires. He takes us off indeed from the fulſom pleaſures of ſenſe, which by their groſſneſs may cloy, yet by reaſon of their emptineſs can never fill us; and brings us to taſte the more pure Spiritual delights which are the true Elixirs of pleaſures, in compariſon whereof all the ſenſual are but as the dregs or *ſcums* in an extraction, after the ſpirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from an aſpiring to thoſe pinnacles of Honour, where we always ſit tottering and often fall down, but yet invites us to ſoar higher, where we ſhall have the *Moon* with all her viciffitudes, and changes *under our feet*, *Revel* 12. 1. and enjoy a Grandeur as irreverſible as ſplendid.

11. THUS do's he ſhew us a way to hallow our moſt unſanctified affections; thus, ac-

cording to the prophesie of *Zechariah*, may
holiness be writ even upon the bells of the horses,
Zechar. 14. 29. upon our most brutal inclina-
 tions; and thus may all those Feminine pas-
 sions which now seduce Women from Virtue,
 advance them in it. Let her that is amorous,
 place her love upon him who is (as the Spouse
 tells us, *Cantic. 5. 10.*) *the chiefest among ten*
thousand; she that is angry, turn her edge
 against her sins; she that is haughty, disdain
 the Devil's drudgery; she that is fearful, dread
 him who *can destroy both body and soul in hell,*
Matth. 10. 28. and she that is sad, reserve her
 tears for her penitential Offices. Thus may
 they consecrate even their infirmities, and
 tho' they cannot Deify, or erect Temples to
 them, as the Romans did to their passions,
 nay their diseases; yet after they are thus
 cleansed, they may sacrifice them as the Jews
 did the clean beasts in the Tabernacle. Only
 Irreligion and Profaneness is exempt from this
 privilege, no water of Purification can cleanse
 it, or make it serviceable in the Temple; that
 like the spoils of *Jericho*, is so execrable, that
 it must be devoted to destruction, as *an accursed*
thing, Josh. 6. 17. For tho' God do's not despise
 the work of his own hands, hath so much
 kindness to his Creatures, that he endeavours
 to reduce all our native inclinations to their
 primitive rectitude; and therefore do's not
 abolish, but purify them, yet Atheism is none
 of

of those; 'tis a counter-blast from hell, in opposition to that mighty wind in which the Holy Spirit descended. Tho' the subject in which it subsists may be reform'd, the Person may turn Christian, and the wit that maintain'd its Blasphemous paradoxes, may be converted to Holier uses: yet the quality it self is capable of no such happy Metamorphosis; that must be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary. Which shews how transcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good: even that Omnipotence which can out of the very stones raise Children to *Abraham*, attempts not any transmutation of this; which ought therefore to possess all hearts with a detestation of it, and advance them in an earnest pursuit of all the parts of Piety.

12. AND that is it which I would now once more (as a fare-well exhortation) commend to my Female Readers, as that which virtually contains all other accomplishments; 'tis that Pearl in the Gospel for which they may part with all, and make a good bargain too. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom*, says the Wifest of Men, *Prov. 1. 7* and by his experience he shews, that it is the completing end of it too; for he no sooner declin'd from that, but he grew to dotage and dishonour. Let all those therefore to whom God has dispens'd an outward affluence, given them a visible splendor in the eyes of the world,
be

be careful to secure to themselves *that honour which comes from God only*, John 5. 44. unite their Souls to that Supreme Majesty, who is the fountain of true Honour: who in his bestowing the Crown of Righteousness proceeds by the same measures by which he disposed the Crown of *Israel*, when he avow'd to *Samuel* that he *lookt not on the outward appearance but beheld the heart*, 1 Sam. 16. 7. If God see not his own Image there, all the beauty and gayety of the outward form is despicable in his eyes, like the Apples of *Sodom* only a kind of painted dust. But if Piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the Kings daughter, *all glorious within* too; a much more valuable bravery than the *garment of needle work and vesture of gold*, Psalm 45. 14. And this is it that must enter them into the King's *Palace*, into that *New Jerusalem*, where they shall not wear, but inhabit *Pearls and Gems*, Rev. 21. 19. be beautiful without the help of Art or Nature, by the mere reflection of the Divine Brightness; be all that their then enlarg'd comprehensions can wish, and infinitely more than they can here imagine.

F I N I S.



THE CONTENTS.

PART I.

Sect. 1. <i>Of Modesty.</i>	p. 1.
Sect. 2. <i>Of Meekness.</i>	p. 32.
Sect. 3. <i>Of Compassion.</i>	p. 52.
Sect. 4. <i>Of Affability.</i>	p. 71.
Sect. 5. <i>Of Piety.</i>	p. 86.

PART II.

Sect. 1. <i>Of Virgins.</i>	p. 195. 155
Sect. 2. <i>Of Wives.</i>	p. 180.
Sect. 3. <i>Of Widows.</i>	p. 231.
<i>The Close.</i>	p. 258.

THE CONTENTS.

PART I.

Sect. 1.	Of Modesty	p. 1.
Sect. 2.	Of Meekness	p. 22.
Sect. 3.	Of Compassion	p. 22.
Sect. 4.	Of Affability	p. 71.
Sect. 5.	Of Purity	p. 86.

PART II.

Sect. 1.	Of Virgins	p. 107.
Sect. 2.	Of Widows	p. 130.
Sect. 3.	Of Widowers	p. 131.
	The Close	p. 158.



